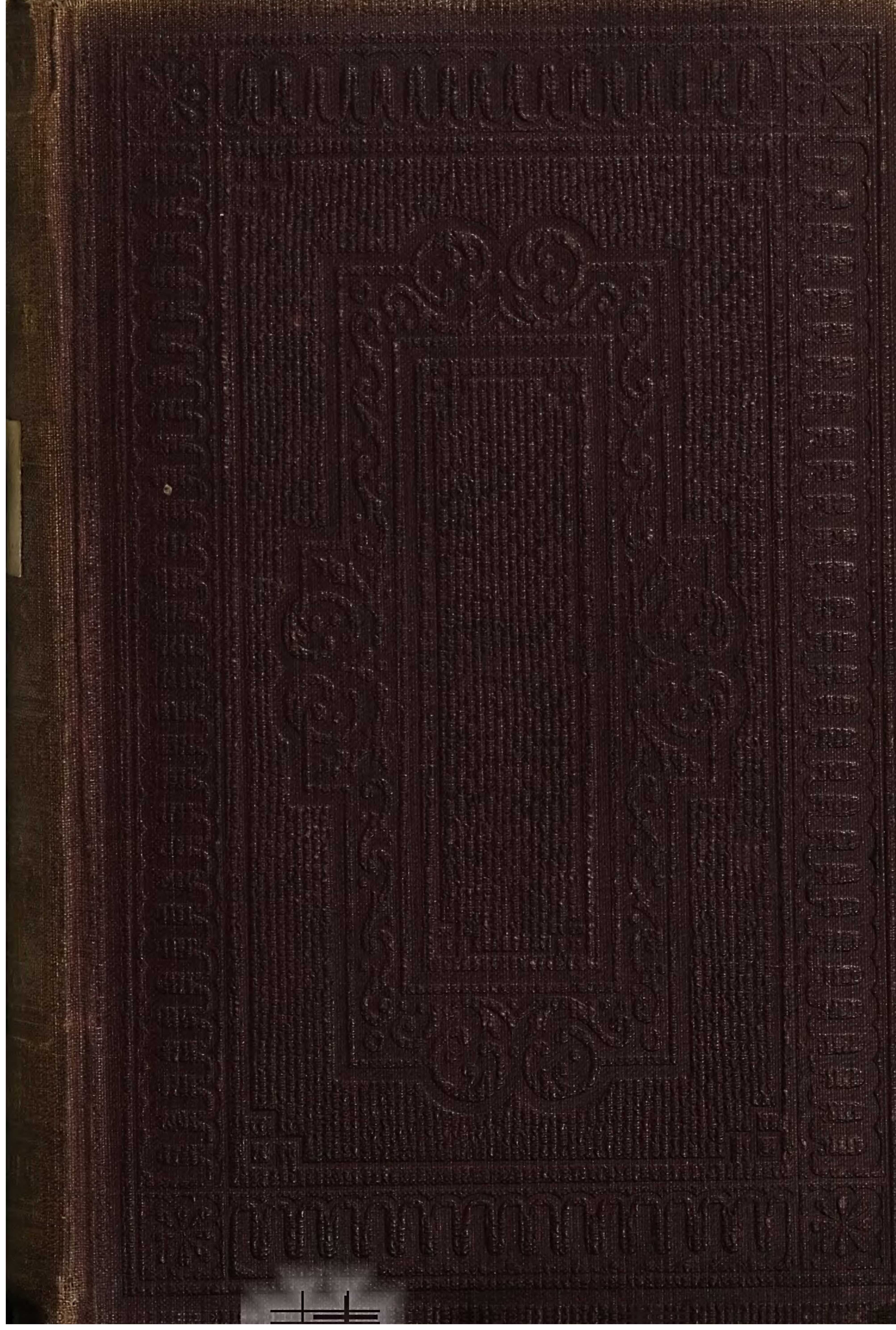




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NOVELS
OF
SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTON

Library Edition

HISTORICAL ROMANCES

VOL. V.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

R I E N Z I

THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES

BY

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

LIBRARY EDITION—IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXI

“Then turn we to her latest Tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
Rienzi, last of Romans! While the tree
Of Freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
The Forum's champion, and the People's chief—
Her new-born Numa thou!”

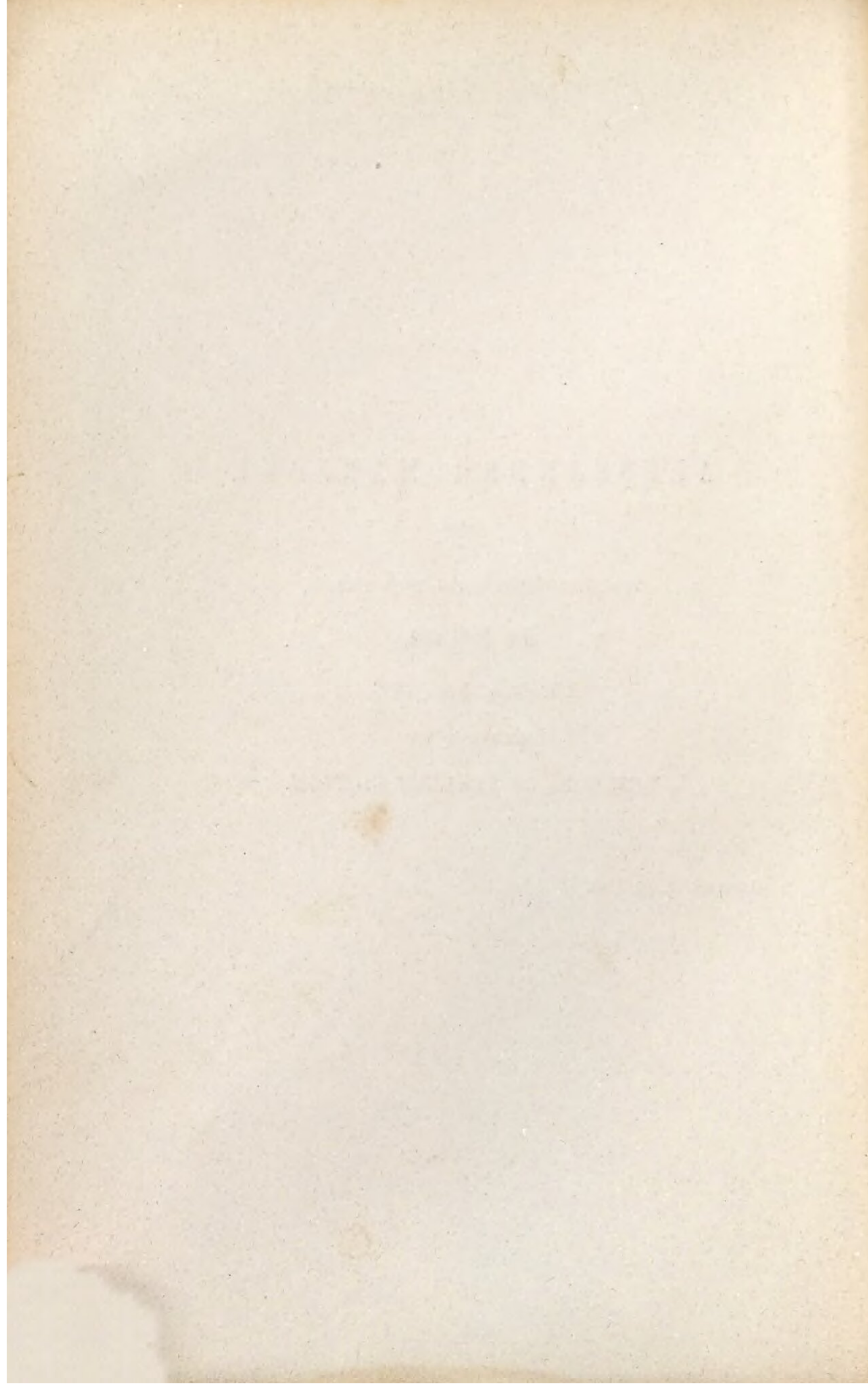
CHILDE HAROLD, cant. iv., stanza 114.

“Amidst the indulgence of enthusiasm and eloquence, Petrarch, Italy, and Europe, were astonished by a revolution, which realised for a moment his most splendid visions.”—GIBBON, chap. lxx.



TO
ALESSANDRO MANZONI,
AS
TO THE GENIUS OF THE PLACE,
Are Dedicated
THESE FRUITS,
GATHERED ON
THE SOIL OF ITALIAN FICTION.

LONDON, *Dec.* 1, 1835.



PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1835.

I BEGAN this tale two years ago at Rome. On removing to Naples, I threw it aside for “The Last Days of Pompeii,” which required, more than “Rienzi,” the advantage of residence within reach of the scenes described. The fate of the Roman Tribune continued, however, to haunt and impress me, and, some time after “Pompeii” was published, I renewed my earlier undertaking. I regarded the completion of these volumes, indeed, as a kind of duty;—for having had occasion to read the original authorities from which modern historians have drawn their accounts of the life of Rienzi, I was led to believe that a very remarkable man had been superficially judged, and a very important period crudely examined.* And this belief was sufficiently strong to induce me at first to meditate a more serious work upon the life and times of Rienzi.† Various reasons concurred against this project—and I renounced the biography to commence the fiction. I have still, however, adhered, with a greater fidelity than is customary in

* See Appendix, Nos. I. and II.

† I have adopted the termination of *Rienzi* instead of *Rienzo*, as being more familiar to the general reader.—But the latter is perhaps the more accurate reading, since the name was a popular corruption from Lorenzo.

Romance, to all the leading events of the public life of the Roman Tribune ; and the reader will perhaps find in these pages a more full and detailed account of the rise and fall of Rienzi, than in any English work of which I am aware. I have, it is true, taken a view of his character different in some respects from that of Gibbon or Sismondi. But it is a view, in all its main features, which I believe (and think I could prove) myself to be warranted in taking, not less by the facts of History than the laws of Fiction. In the meanwhile, as I have given the facts from which I have drawn my interpretation of the principal agent, the reader has sufficient data for his own judgment. In the picture of the Roman Populace, as in that of the Roman Nobles of the fourteenth century, I follow literally the descriptions left to us ;—they are not flattering, but they are faithful, likenesses.

Preserving generally the real chronology of Rienzi's life, the plot of this work extends over a space of some years, and embraces the variety of characters necessary to a true delineation of events. The story, therefore, cannot have precisely that order of interest found in fictions strictly and genuinely *dramatic*, in which (to my judgment at least) the time ought to be as limited as possible, and the characters as few ;—no new character of importance to the catastrophe being admissible towards the end of the work. If I may use the word Epic in its most modest and unassuming acceptation, this Fiction, in short, though indulging in dramatic situations, belongs, as a whole, rather to the Epic than the Dramatic school.

I cannot conclude without rendering the tribute of my praise and homage to the versatile and gifted author of the beautiful Tragedy of Rienzi. Considering that our

hero be the same—considering that we had the same materials from which to choose our several stories—I trust I shall be found to have little, if at all, trespassed upon ground previously occupied. With the single exception of a love-intrigue between a relative of Rienzi and one of the antagonist party, which makes the plot of Miss Mitford's Tragedy, and is little more than an episode in my Romance, having slight effect on the conduct and none on the fate of the hero, I am not aware of any resemblance between the two works; and even *this* coincidence I could easily have removed, had I deemed it the least advisable:—but it would be almost discreditable if I had *nothing* that resembled a performance possessing so much it were an honour to imitate.

In fact, the prodigal materials of the story—the rich and exuberant complexities of Rienzi's character—joined to the advantage possessed by the Novelist of embracing all that the Dramatist must reject*—are sufficient to prevent Dramatist and Novelist from interfering with each other.

LONDON, *December* 1, 1835.

* Thus the slender space permitted to the Dramatist does not *allow* Miss Mitford to be very faithful to facts; to distinguish between Rienzi's earlier and his later period of power; or to detail the true, but somewhat intricate causes of his rise, his splendour, and his fall.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1848.

FROM the time of its first appearance, “ Rienzi ” has had the good fortune to rank high amongst my most popular works—though its interest is rather drawn from a faithful narration of historical facts, than from the inventions of fancy. And the success of this experiment confirms me in my belief that the true mode of employing history in the service of romance, is to study diligently the materials *as* history; conform to such views of the facts as the Author would adopt if he related them in the dry character of historian; and obtain that warmer interest which fiction bestows, by tracing the causes of the facts in the characters and emotions of the personages of the time. The events of his work are thus already shaped to his hand—the characters already created—what remains for him is the inner, not outer, history of man—the chronicle of the human heart; and it is by this that he introduces a new harmony between character and event, and adds the completer solution of what is actual and true, by those speculations of what is natural and probable, which are out of the province of history, but belong especially to the philosophy of romance. And—if it be permitted the tale-teller to come reverently for instruction in his art to the mightiest teacher of all, who, whether in

the page, or on the scene, would give to airy fancies the breath and the form of life—such, we may observe, is the lesson the humblest craftsman in historical romance may glean from the Historical Plays of Shakespeare. Necessarily, Shakespeare consulted history according to the imperfect lights, and from the popular authorities, of his age; and I do not say, therefore, that as an historian we can rely upon Shakespeare as correct. But to that in which he believed he rigidly adhered; nor did he seek, as lesser artists (such as Victor Hugo and his disciples) seek now to turn per force the Historical into the Poetical, but, leaving history as he found it, to call forth from its arid prose the flower of the latent poem. Nay, even in the more imaginative plays, which he has founded upon novels and legends popular in his time, it is curious and instructive to see how little he has altered the original groundwork—taking for granted the main materials of the story, and reserving all his matchless resources of wisdom and invention to illustrate from mental analysis the creations whose outline he was content to borrow. He receives as a literal fact not to be altered, the somewhat incredible assertion of the novelist, that the pure and delicate and high-born Venetian loves the swarthy Moor—and that Romeo, fresh from his “woes for Rosaline,” becomes suddenly enamoured of Juliet: he found the Improbable, and employed his art to make it truthful.

That “Rienzi” should have attracted peculiar attention in Italy is of course to be attributed to the choice of the subject rather than to the skill of the Author. It has been translated into the Italian language by eminent writers; and the authorities for the new view of Rienzi’s times and character which the Author deemed himself warranted to take, have been compared with his text by careful critics

and illustrious scholars, in those states in which the work has been permitted to circulate.* I may say, I trust without unworthy pride, that the result has confirmed the accuracy of delineations which English readers, relying only on the brilliant but disparaging account in Gibbon, deemed too favourable ; and has tended to restore the great Tribune to his long-forgotten claims to the love and reverence of the Italian land. Nor, if I may trust to the assurances that have reached me from many now engaged in the aim of political regeneration, has the effect of that revival of the honours due to a national hero, leading to the ennobling study of great examples, been wholly without its influence upon the rising generation of Italian youth, and thereby upon those stirring events which have recently drawn the eyes of Europe to the men and the lands beyond the Alps.

In preparing for the Press this edition of a work illustrative of the exertions of a Roman, in advance of his time, for the political freedom of his country, and of those struggles between contending principles, of which Italy was the most stirring field in the Middle Ages, it is not out of place or season to add a few sober words, whether as a student of the Italian Past, or as an observer, with some experience of the social elements of Italy as it now exists, upon the state of affairs in that country.

It is nothing new to see the Papal Church in the capacity of a popular reformer, and in contra-position to the despotic potentates of the several states, as well as to the German Emperor, who nominally inherits the sceptre of the Cæsars. Such was its common character under its more illustrious pontiffs ; and the old Republics of Italy

* In the Papal States, I believe, it was neither prudently nor effectually proscribed.

grew up under the shadow of the papal throne, harbouring ever two factions—the one for the Emperor, the one for the Pope—the latter the more naturally allied to Italian independence. On the modern stage, we almost see the repetition of many an ancient drama. But the past should teach us to doubt the continuous and steadfast progress of any single line of policy under a principality so constituted as that of the Papal Church—a principality in which no race can be perpetuated, in which no objects can be permanent ; in which the successor is chosen by a select ecclesiastical synod, under a variety of foreign as well as of national influences ; in which the chief usually ascends the throne at an age that ill adapts his mind to the idea of human progress, and the active direction of mundane affairs ;—a principality in which the peculiar sanctity that wraps the person of the Sovereign exonerates him from the healthful liabilities of a power purely temporal, and directly accountable to Man. A reforming pope is a lucky accident, and dull indeed must be the brain which believes in the possibility of a long succession of reforming popes, or which can regard as other than precarious and unstable the discordant combination of a constitutional government with an infallible head.

It is as true as it is trite that political freedom is not the growth of a day—it is not a flower without a stalk, and it must gradually develop itself from amidst the unfolding leaves of kindred institutions.

In one respect, the Austrian domination, fairly considered, has been beneficial to the states over which it has been directly exercised, and may be even said to have unconsciously schooled them to the capacity for freedom. In those states the personal rights which depend on impartial and incorrupt administration of the law, are infi-

nitely more secure than in most of the Courts of Italy. Bribery, which shamefully predominates in the judicature of certain principalities, is as unknown in the juridical courts of Austrian Italy as in England. The Emperor himself is often involved in legal disputes with a subject, and justice is as free and as firm for the humblest suitor, as if his antagonist were his equal. Austria, indeed, but holds together the motley and inharmonious members of its vast domain on either side the Alps, by a general character of paternal mildness and forbearance in all that great circle of good government which lies without the one principle of constitutional liberty. It asks but of its subjects to submit to be well governed—without agitating the question “how and by what means that government is carried on.” For every man, except the politician, the innovator, Austria is no harsh stepmother. But it is obviously clear that the better in other respects the administration of a state, it does but foster the more the desire for that political security which is only found in constitutional freedom: the reverence paid to personal rights, but begets the passion for political; and under a mild despotism are already half matured the germs of a popular constitution. But it is still a grave question whether Italy is ripe for self-government—and whether, were it possible that the Austrian domination could be shaken off, the very passion so excited, the very bloodshed so poured forth, would not ultimately place the larger portion of Italy under auspices less favourable to the sure growth of freedom than those which silently brighten under the sway of the German Cæsar.

The two kingdoms, at the opposite extremes of Italy, to which circumstance and nature seem to assign the main ascendancy, are Naples and Sardinia. Looking to the

former, it is impossible to discover on the face of the earth a country more adapted for commercial prosperity. Nature formed it as the garden of Europe, and the mart of the Mediterranean. Its soil and climate could unite the products of the East with those of the Western hemisphere. The rich Island of Sicily should be the great corn granary of the modern nations as it was of the ancient; the figs, the olives, the oranges, of both the Sicilies, under skilful cultivation, should equal the produce of Spain and the Orient, and the harbours of the kingdom (the keys to three quarters of the globe) should be crowded with the sails and busy with the life of commerce. But, in the character of its population, Naples has been invariably in the rear of Italian progress; it caught but partial inspiration from the free Republics, or even the wise Tyrannies, of the Middle Ages; the theatre of frequent revolutions without fruit; and all rational enthusiasm created by that insurrection, which has lately bestowed on Naples the boon of a representative system, cannot but be tempered by the conviction that of all the states in Italy, this is the one which least warrants the belief of permanence to political freedom, or of capacity to retain with vigour what may be seized by passion.*

* If the Electoral Chambers in the new Neapolitan Constitution, give a fair share of members to the Island of Sicily, it will be rich in the inevitable elements of discord, and nothing save a wisdom and moderation, which cannot soberly be anticipated, can prevent the ultimate separation of the island from the dominion of Naples. Nature has set the ocean between the two countries—but difference in character, and degree and quality of civilisation—national jealousies, historical memories, have trebled the space of the seas that roll between them.—More easy to unite under one free parliament, Spain with Flanders; or reannex to England its old domains of Aquitaine and Normandy—than to unite in one council-chamber *truly* popular, the passions, interests, and prejudices of Sicily and

Far otherwise is it with Sardinia. Many years since, the writer of these pages ventured to predict that the time must come when Sardinia would lead the van of Italian civilisation, and take proud place amongst the greater nations of Europe. In the great portion of this population there is visible the new blood of a young race ! it is not, as with other Italian states, a worn-out stock ; you do not see there a people fallen, proud of the past, and lazy amidst ruins, but a people rising, practical, industrious, active ; there, in a word, is an eager youth to be formed to mature development, not a decrepit age to be restored to bloom and muscle. Progress is the great characteristic of the Sardinian state. Leave it for five years ; visit it again, and you behold improvement. When you enter the kingdom and find, by the very skirts of its admirable roads, a raised footpath for the passengers and travellers from town to town, you become suddenly aware that you are in a land where close attention to the humbler classes is within the duties of a government. As you pass on from the more purely Italian part of the population—from the Genoese country into that of Piedmont—the difference between a new people and an old, on which I have dwelt, becomes visible in the improved cultivation of the soil, the better habitations of the labourer, the neater aspect of the towns, the greater activity in the thoroughfares. To the extraordinary virtues of the King, as King, justice is scarcely done, whether in England or abroad. Certainly, despite his recent conces-

Naples.—Time will show. And now, in May 1849,—Time has already shown the impracticability of the first scheme proposed for cordial union between Naples and Sicily, and has rendered it utterly impossible, by mutual recollections of hatred, bequeathed by a civil war of singular barbarism, that Naples should permanently retain Sicily by any other hold than the brute force of conquest.

sions, Charles Albert is not and cannot be at heart, much of a constitutional reformer; and his strong religious tendencies, which, perhaps unjustly, have procured him in philosophical quarters the character of a bigot, may link him more than his political with the cause of the Father of his Church. But he is nobly and pre-eminently national, careful of the prosperity and jealous of the honour of his own state, while conscientiously desirous of the independence of Italy. His attention to business is indefatigable. Nothing escapes his vigilance. Over all departments of the kingdom is the eye of a man ever anxious to improve. Already the silk manufactures of Sardinia almost rival those of Lyons: in their own departments the tradesmen of Turin exhibit an artistic elegance and elaborate finish, scarcely exceeded in the wares of London and Paris. The King's internal regulations are admirable; his laws, administered with the most impartial justice—his forts and defences are in that order, without which, at least on the Continent, no land is safe—his army is the most perfect in Italy. His wise genius extends itself to the elegant as to the useful arts—an encouragement that shames England, and even France, is bestowed upon the School for Painters, which has become one of the ornaments of his illustrious reign. The character of the main part of the population, and the geographical position of his country, assist the monarch, and must force on himself, or his successors, in the career of improvement so signally begun. In the character of the people, the vigour of the Northman ennobles the ardour and fancy of the West. In the position of the country, the public mind is brought into constant communication with the new ideas in the free lands of Europe. Civili-

sation sets in direct currents towards the streets and marts of Turin. Whatever the result of the present crisis in Italy, no power and no chance which statesmen can predict, can preclude Sardinia from ultimately heading all that is best in Italy. The King may improve his present position, or peculiar prejudices, inseparable perhaps from the heritage of absolute monarchy, and which the raw and rude councils of an Electoral Chamber, newly called into life, must often irritate and alarm, may check his own progress towards the master throne of the Ausonian land. But the people themselves, sooner or later, will do the work of the King. And in now looking round Italy for a race worthy of Rienzi, and able to accomplish his proud dreams, I see but one for which the time is ripe or ripening, and I place the hopes of Italy in the men of Piedmont and Sardinia.

LONDON, *February* 14, 1848.

N.B.—In the short time that has elapsed since the above remarks were penned, events have occurred which justify the doubts expressed in these pages—though by the more sanguine friends of Freedom those doubts were then scouted—viz. as “to whether Italy was ripe for self-government”—“whether it were possible that the Austrian domination could be shaken off”—and “whether any steadfast line of policy, favourable to reform, could be expected from the Papal Church.” Nothing, however, has occurred to weaken my conviction that Piedmont will ultimately become the leading state of Italy. I do not withdraw the praise I have bestowed on the unfortunate Charles Albert; he has committed some grave errors, and has been betrayed by those who should most zealously have supported him. But he has lost a crown in defence of that national independence, the ardour for which constituted, as I have implied, his predominant characteristic, and has left in the hearts of his countrymen but one sentiment of gratitude and veneration. Honour to the King who falls in defence of his Fatherland!—*May* 1849.

BOOK I.

THE TIME, THE PLACE, AND THE MEN.

Fu da sua gioventudine nutricato di latte di eloquenza ; buono grammatico, migliore rettorico, autorista buono. . . Oh, come spesso diceva, “Dove sono questi buoni Romani? Dov’ è loro somma giustizia? Poterommi trovare in tempo che questi fioriscano?” Era bel ’omo. . . Accadde che uno suo frate fu ucciso, e non ne fu fatta vendetta di sua morte : non lo poteò aiutare ; pensa lungo mano vendicare ’l sangue di suo frate ; pensa lunga mano dirizzare la cittate di Roma male guidata.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*. Ed. 1828. Forli.

From his youth he was nourished with the milk of eloquence ; a good grammarian, a better rhetorician, well versed in the writings of authors. . . Oh, how often would he say, “Where are those good Romans ? Where is their supreme justice ? Shall I ever behold such times as those in which they flourished ?” He was a handsome man. . . It happened that a brother of his was slain, and no retribution was made for his death : he could not help him ; long did he ponder how to avenge his brother’s blood ; long did he ponder how to direct the ill-guided state of Rome.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

RIENZI,

THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.



BOOK I.—CHAPTER I.

The Brothers.

THE celebrated name which forms the title to this work will sufficiently apprise the reader that it is in the earlier half of the fourteenth century that my story opens.

It was on a summer evening that two youths might be seen walking beside the banks of the Tiber, not far from that part of its winding course which sweeps by the base of Mount Aventine. The path they had selected was remote and tranquil. It was only at a distance that were seen the scattered and squalid houses that bordered the river, from amidst which rose, dark and frequent, the high roof and enormous towers which marked the fortified mansion of some Roman baron. On one side of the river, behind the cottages of the

fishermen, soared Mount Janiculum, dark with massive foliage, from which gleamed, at frequent intervals, the grey walls of many a castellated palace, and the spires and columns of a hundred churches ; on the other side, the deserted Aventine rose abrupt and steep, covered with thick brushwood ; while, on the height, from concealed but numerous convents, rolled, not unmusically, along the quiet landscape and the rippling waves, the sound of the holy bell.

Of the young men introduced in this scene, the elder, who might have somewhat passed his twentieth year, was of a tall and even commanding stature ; and there was that in his presence remarkable and almost noble, despite the homeliness of his garb, which consisted of the long loose gown and the plain tunic, both of dark-grey serge, which distinguished, at that time, the dress of the humbler scholars who frequented the monasteries for such rude knowledge as then yielded a scanty return for intense toil. His countenance was handsome, and would have been rather gay than thoughtful in its expression, but for that vague and abstracted dreaminess of eye which so usually denotes a propensity to reverie and contemplation, and betrays that the past or the future is more congenial to the mind than the enjoyment and action of the present hour.

The younger, who was yet a boy, had nothing striking in his appearance or countenance, unless an expression of great sweetness and gentleness could be so called ; and there was something almost feminine in the tender deference with which he appeared to listen

to his companion. His dress was that usually worn by the humbler classes, though somewhat neater, perhaps, and newer; and the fond vanity of a mother might be detected in the care with which the long and silky ringlets had been smoothed and parted as they escaped from his cap and flowed midway down his shoulders.

As they thus sauntered on, beside the whispering reeds of the river, each with his arm round the form of his comrade, there was a grace in the bearing, in the youth, and in the evident affection of the brothers—for such their connection—which elevated the lowliness of their apparent condition.

“Dear brother,” said the elder, “I cannot express to thee how I enjoy these evening hours. To you alone I feel as if I were not a mere visionary and idler when I talk of the uncertain future, and build up my palaces of the air. Our parents listen to me as if I were uttering fine things out of a book; and my dear mother, Heaven bless her! wipes her eyes, and says, ‘Hark, what a scholar he is!’ As for the monks, if I ever dare look from my Livy, and cry, ‘Thus should Rome be again!’ they stare, and gape, and frown, as though I had broached an heresy. But you, sweet brother, though you share not my studies, sympathise so kindly with all their results—you seem so to approve my wild schemes, and to encourage my ambitious hopes—that sometimes I forget our birth, our fortunes, and think and dare as if no blood save that of the Teuton emperor flowed through our veins.”

“Methinks, dear Cola,” said the younger brother,

“that Nature played us an unfair trick—to you she transmitted the royal soul, derived from our father’s parentage ; and to me only the quiet and lowly spirit of my mother’s humble lineage.”

“Nay,” answered Cola, quickly, “you would then have the brighter share,—for I should have but the Barbarian origin, and you the Roman. Time was, when to be a simple Roman was to be nobler than a northern king.—Well, well, we may live to see great changes !”

“I shall live to see thee a great man, and that will content me,” said the younger, smiling affectionately ; “a great scholar all confess you to be already : our mother predicts your fortunes every time she hears of your welcome visits to the Colonna.”

“The Colonna !” said Cola, with a bitter smile ; “the Colonna—the pedants !—They affect, dull souls, the knowledge of the past, play the patron, and misquote Latin over their cups ! They are pleased to welcome me at their board, because the Roman doctors call me learned, and because Nature gave me a wild wit, which to them is pleasanter than the stale jests of a hired buffon. Yes, they would advance my fortunes—but how ? by some place in the public offices, which would fill a dishonoured coffer, by wringing, yet more sternly, the hard-earned coins from our famishing citizens ! If there be a vile thing in the world, it is a plebeian, advanced by patricians, not for the purpose of righting his own order, but for playing the pander to the worst interests of theirs. He who is of the

people but makes himself a traitor to his birth if he furnishes the excuse for these tyrant hypocrites to lift up their hands and cry—"See what liberty exists in Rome, when *we*, the patricians, thus elevate a plebeian!" Did they ever elevate a plebeian if he sympathised with plebeians? No, brother; should I be lifted above our condition, I will be raised by the arms of my countrymen, and not upon their necks."

"All I hope is, Cola, that you will not, in your zeal for your fellow-citizens, forget how dear you are to us. No greatness could ever reconcile me to the thought that it brought you danger."

"And *I* could laugh at all danger, if it led to greatness. But greatness—greatness! Vain dream! Let us keep it for our *night* sleep. Enough of *my* plans; now, dearest brother, of yours."

And, with the sanguine and cheerful elasticity which belonged to him, the young Cola, dismissing all wilder thoughts, bent his mind to listen, and to enter into, the humbler projects of his brother. The new boat and the holiday dress, and the cot removed to a quarter more secure from the oppression of the barons, and such distant pictures of love as a dark eye and a merry lip conjure up to the vague sentiments of a boy;—to schemes and aspirations of which such objects made the limit, did the scholar listen, with a relaxed brow and a tender smile; and often, in later life, did that conversation occur to him, when he shrank from asking his own heart which ambition was the wiser.

“And then,” continued the younger brother, “by degrees I might save enough to purchase such a vessel as that which we now see, laden, doubtless, with corn and merchandise, bringing—oh, such a good return—that I could fill your room with books, and never hear you complain that you were not rich enough to purchase some crumbling old monkish manuscript. Ah, that would make me so happy!” Cola smiled as he pressed his brother closer to his breast.

“Dear boy,” said he, “may it rather be mine to provide for your wishes! Yet methinks the masters of yon vessel have no enviable possession: see how anxiously the men look round, and behind, and before: peaceful traders though they be, they fear, it seems, even in this city (once the emporium of the civilised world), some pirate in pursuit; and ere the voyage be over, they may find that pirate in a Roman noble. Alas, to what are we reduced!”

The vessel thus referred to was speeding rapidly down the river, and some three or four armed men on deck were indeed intently surveying the quiet banks on either side, as if anticipating a foe. The bark soon, however, glided out of sight, and the brothers fell back upon these themes which require only the future for a text to become attractive to the young.

At length, as the evening darkened, they remembered that it was past the usual hour in which they returned home, and they began to retrace their steps.

“Stay,” said Cola, abruptly, “how our talk has beguiled me! Father Uberto promised me a rare

manuscript, which the good friar confesses hath puzzled the whole convent. I was to seek his cell for it this evening. Tarry here a few minutes, it is but half-way up the Aventine. I shall soon return."

"Can I not accompany you?"

"Nay," returned Cola, with considerate kindness, "you have borne toil all the day, and must be wearied; my labours, of the body, at least, have been light enough. You are delicate, too, and seem fatigued already; the rest will refresh you. I shall not be long."

The boy acquiesced, though he rather wished to accompany his brother; but he was of a meek and yielding temper, and seldom resisted the lightest command of those he loved. He sat him down on a little bank by the river-side, and the firm step and towering form of his brother were soon hid from his gaze by the thick and melancholy foliage.

At first he sat very quietly, enjoying the cool air, and thinking over all the stories of ancient Rome that his brother had told him in their walk. At length he recollected that his little sister, Irene, had begged him to bring her home some flowers; and, gathering such as he could find at hand (and many a flower grew, wild and clustering, over that desolate spot), he again seated himself, and began weaving them into one of those garlands for which the southern peasantry still retain their ancient affection, and something of their classic skill.

While the boy was thus engaged, the tramp of

horses and the loud shouting of men were heard at a distance. They came near, and nearer.

“Some baron’s procession, perhaps, returning from a feast,” thought the boy. “It will be a pretty sight—their white plumes and scarlet mantles! I love to see such sights, but I will just move out of their way.”

So, still mechanically plaiting his garland, but with eyes turned towards the quarter of the expected procession, the young Roman moved yet nearer towards the river.

Presently the train came in view,—a gallant company, in truth; horsemen in front, riding two abreast, where the path permitted, their steeds caparisoned superbly, their plumes waving gaily, and the gleam of their corselets glittering through the shades of the dusky twilight. A large and miscellaneous crowd, all armed, some with pikes and mail, others with less warlike or worse fashioned weapons, followed the cavaliers; and high above plume and pike floated the blood-red banner of the Orsini, with the motto and device (in which was ostentatiously displayed the Guelfic badge of the keys of St Peter) wrought in burnished gold. A momentary fear crossed the boy’s mind, for at that time, and in that city, a nobleman begirt with his swordsmen was more dreaded than a wild beast by the plebeians; but it was already too late to fly—the train were upon him.

“Ho, boy!” cried the leader of the horsemen, Martino di Porto, one of the great House of the Orsini;

“hast thou seen a boat pass up the river?—But thou must have seen it—how long since?”

“I saw a large boat about half an hour ago,” answered the boy, terrified by the rough voice and imperious bearing of the cavalier.

“Sailing right ahead, with a green flag at the stern?”

“The same, noble sir.”

“On, then! we will stop her course ere the moon rise,” said the baron. “On!—let the boy go with us, lest he prove traitor, and alarm the Colonna.”

“An Orsini, an Orsini!” shouted the multitude; “on, on!” and, despite the prayers and remonstrances of the boy, he was placed in the thickest of the crowd, and borne, or rather dragged along with the rest—frightened, breathless, almost weeping, with his poor little garland still hanging on his arm, while a sling was thrust into his unwilling hand. Still he felt, through all his alarm, a kind of childish curiosity to see the result of the pursuit.

By the loud and eager conversation of those about him, he learned that the vessel he had seen contained a supply of corn destined to a fortress up the river held by the Colonna, then at deadly feud with the Orsini; and it was the object of the expedition in which the boy had been thus lucklessly entrained to intercept the provision, and divert it to the garrison of Martino di Porto. This news somewhat increased his consternation, for the boy belonged to a family that claimed the patronage of the Colonna.

Anxiously and tearfully he looked with every mo-

ment up the steep ascent of the Aventine; but his guardian, his protector, still delayed his appearance.

They had now proceeded some way, when a winding in the road brought suddenly before them the object of their pursuit, as, seen by the light of the earliest stars, it scudded rapidly down the stream.

“Now, the saints be blest!” quoth the chief; “she is ours!”

“Hold!” said a captain (a German) riding next to Martino, in a half whisper, “I hear sounds which I like not, by yonder trees—hark! the neigh of a horse!—by my faith, too, there is the gleam of a corselet.”

“Push on, my masters!” cried Martino; “the heron shall not balk the eagle—push on!”

With renewed shouts, those on foot pushed forward, till, as they had nearly gained the copse referred to by the German, a small compact body of horsemen, armed *cap-a-pie*, dashed from amidst the trees, and, with spears in their rests, charged into the ranks of the pursuers.

“A Colonna! a Colonna!” “An Orsini! an Orsini!” were shouts loudly and fiercely interchanged. Martino di Porto, a man of great bulk and ferocity, and his cavaliers, who were chiefly German mercenaries, met the encounter unshaken. “Beware the bear’s hug,” cried the Orsini, as down went his antagonist, rider and steed, before his lance.

The contest was short and fierce! the complete armour of the horsemen protected them on either side from wounds,—not so unscathed fared the half-armed foot-

followers of the Orsini, as they pressed, each pushed on by the other, against the Colonna. After a shower of stones and darts, which fell but as hailstones against the thick mail of the horsemen, they closed in, and by their number, obstructed the movements of the steeds, while the spear, sword, and battle-axe of their opponents made ruthless havoc amongst their undisciplined ranks. And Martino, who cared little how many of his mere mob were butchered, seeing that his foes were for the moment embarrassed by the wild rush and gathering circle of his foot train (for the place of conflict, though wider than the previous road, was confined and narrow), made a sign to some of his horsemen, and was about to ride forward towards the boat, now nearly out of sight, when a bugle at some distance was answered by one of his enemy at hand ; and the shout of "Colonna to the rescue!" was echoed afar off. A few moments brought in view a numerous train of horse at full speed, with the banners of the Colonna waving gallantly in the front.

"A plague on the wizards ! who would have imagined they had divined us so craftily?" muttered Martino. "We must not abide these odds ;" and the hand he had first raised for advance, now gave the signal of retreat.

Serried breast to breast and in complete order, the horsemen of Martino turned to fly ; the foot rabble who had come for spoil remained but for slaughter. They endeavoured to imitate their leaders : but how could they all elude the rushing chargers and sharp

lances of their antagonists, whose blood was heated by the affray, and who regarded the lives at their mercy as a boy regards the wasp's nest he destroys? The crowd dispersing in all directions, — some, indeed, escaped up the hills, where the footing was impracticable to the horses; some plunged into the river and swam across to the opposite bank, — those less cool or experienced, who fled right onwards, served, by clogging the way of their enemy, to facilitate the flight of their leaders, but fell themselves, corpse upon corpse, butchered in the unrelenting and unresisted pursuit.

“No quarter to the ruffians—every Orsini slain is a robber the less—strike for God, the Emperor, and the Colonna!”—such were the shouts which rung the knell of the dismayed and falling fugitives. Among those who fled onward, in the very path most accessible to the cavalry, was the young brother of Cola, so innocently mixed with the affray. Fast he fled, dizzy with terror—poor boy, scarce before ever parted from his parents' or his brother's side!—the trees glided past him—the banks receded:—on he sped, and fast behind came the tramp of the hoofs—the shouts—the curses—the fierce laughter of the foe, as they bounded over the dead and the dying in their path. He was now at the spot in which his brother had left him; hastily he glanced behind, and saw the couched lance and horrent crest of the horseman close at his rear; despairingly he looked up, and, behold! his brother bursting through the tangled brakes that clothed the mountain, and bounding to his succour.

“Save me! save me, brother!” he shrieked aloud, and the shriek reached Cola’s ear;—the snort of the fiery charger breathed hot upon him;—a moment more, and with one wild shrill cry of “Mercy, mercy!” he fell to the ground—a corpse: the lance of the pursuer passing through and through him, from back to breast, and nailing him on the very sod where he had sate, full of young life and careless hope, not an hour ago.

The horseman plucked forth his spear, and passed on in pursuit of new victims;—his comrades following. Cola had descended—was on the spot—kneeling by his murdered brother. Presently, to the sound of horn and trumpet, came by a nobler company than most of those hitherto engaged; who had been, indeed, but the advanced-guard of the Colonna. At their head rode a man in years, whose long white hair escaped from his plumed cap and mingled with his venerable beard. “How is this?” said the chief, reining in his steed, “young Rienzi!”

The youth looked up, as he heard that voice, and then flung himself before the steed of the old noble, and, clasping his hands, cried out in a scarce articulate tone: “It is my brother, noble Stephen—a boy, a mere child!—the best—the mildest! See how his blood dabbles the grass;—back, back—your horse’s hoofs are in the stream! Justice, my lord, justice!—you are a great man.”

“Who slew him? an Orsini, doubtless; you shall have justice.”

“Thanks, thanks,” murmured Rienzi, as he tottered once more to his brother’s side, turned the boy’s face from the grass, and strove wildly to feel the pulse of his heart ; he drew back his hand hastily, for it was crimsoned with blood, and lifting that hand on high, shrieked out again, “Justice ! justice !”

The group round the old Stephen Colonna, hardened as they were in such scenes, were affected by the sight. A handsome boy, whose tears ran fast down his cheeks, and who rode his palfrey close by the side of the Colonna, drew forth his sword. “My lord,” said he, half sobbing, “an Orsini only could have butchered a harmless lad like this ; let us lose not a moment—let us on after the ruffians.”

“No, Adrian, no !” cried Stephen, laying his hand on the boy’s shoulder ; “your zeal is to be lauded, but we must beware an ambush. Our men have ventured too far—what ho, there !—sound a return.”

The bugles, in a few minutes, brought back the pursuers—among them, the horseman whose spear had been so fatally misused. He was the leader of those engaged in the conflict with Martino di Porto ; and the gold wrought into his armour, with the gorgeous trappings of his charger, betokened his rank.

“Thanks, my son, thanks,” said the old Colonna to this cavalier, “you have done well and bravely. But tell me, knowest thou, for thou hast an eagle eye, which of the Orsini slew this poor boy !—a foul deed ; his family, too, our clients !”

“Who ? yon lad ?” replied the horseman, lifting the

helmet from his head, and wiping his heated brow ;
“say you so ! how came he, then, with Martino’s rascals ? I fear me the mistake hath cost him dear. I could but suppose him of the Orsini rabble, and so—and so——”

“*You* slew him !” cried Rienzi, in a voice of thunder, starting from the ground. “Justice ! then, my Lord Stephen, justice ! you promised me justice ; and I will have it !”

“My poor youth,” said the old man, compassionately, “you should have had justice against the Orsini ; but see you not this has been an error ? I do not wonder you are too grieved to listen to reason now. We must make this up to you.”

“And let this pay for masses for the boy’s soul ; I grieve me much for the accident,” said the younger Colonna, flinging down a purse of gold. “Ay, see us at the palace next week, young Cola—next week. My father, we had best return towards the boat ; its safeguard may require us yet.”

“Right, Gianni ; stay, some two of you, and see to the poor lad’s corpse—a grievous accident ! how could it chance ?”

The company passed back the way they came, two of the common soldiers alone remaining, except the boy Adrian, who lingered behind a few moments, striving to console Rienzi, who, as one bereft of sense, remained motionless, gazing on the proud array as it swept along, and muttering to himself, “Justice, justice ! I will have it yet.”

The loud voice of the elder Colonna summoned Adrian, reluctantly and weeping, away. "Let me be your brother," said the gallant boy, affectionately pressing the scholar's hand to his heart; "I want a brother like you."

Rienzi made no reply; he did not heed or hear him—dark and stern thoughts, thoughts in which were the germ of a mighty revolution, were at his heart. He woke from them with a start, as the soldiers were now arranging their bucklers so as to make a kind of bier for the corpse, and then burst into tears as he fiercely motioned them away, and clasped the clay to his breast till he was literally soaked with the oozing blood.

The poor child's garland had not dropped from his arm even when he fell, and, entangled by his dress, it still clung around him. It was a sight that recalled to Cola all the gentleness, the kind heart, and winning graces of his only brother—his only friend! It was a sight that seemed to make yet more inhuman the untimely and unmerited fate of that innocent boy. "My brother! my brother!" groaned the survivor; "how shall I meet our mother?—how shall I meet even night and solitude again?—so young, so harmless! See ye, sirs, he was but too gentle. And they will not give us justice, because his murderer was a noble and a Colonna. And this gold, too—gold for a brother's blood! Will they not"—and the young man's eyes glared like fire—"will they not give us justice? Time shall show!" So saying, he bent his

head over the corpse ; his lips muttered, as with some prayer or invocation ; and then rising, his face was as pale as the dead beside him,—but it was no longer pale with *grief*!

From that bloody clay, and that inward prayer, Cola di Rienzi rose a new being. With his young brother died his own youth. But for that event, the future liberator of Rome might have been but a dreamer, a scholar, a poet ; the peaceful rival of Petrarch ; a man of thoughts, not deeds. But from that time, all his faculties, energies, fancies, genius, became concentrated into a single point ; and patriotism, before a vision, leapt into the life and vigour of a passion, lastingly kindled, stubbornly hardened, and awfully consecrated,—by revenge !

CHAPTER II.

An Historical Survey—Not to be passed over, except by those who dislike to understand what they read.

YEARS had passed away, and the death of the Roman boy, amidst more noble and less excusable slaughter, was soon forgotten—forgotten almost by the parents of the slain, in the growing fame and fortunes of their eldest son—forgotten and forgiven never by that son himself. But, between that prologue of blood, and the political drama which ensues—between the fading interest, as it were, of a dream, and the more busy, actual, and continuous excitements of sterner life—this may be the most fitting time to place before the reader a short and rapid outline of the state and circumstances of that city in which the principal scenes of this story are laid ;—an outline necessary, perhaps, to many, for a full comprehension of the motives of the actors, and the vicissitudes of the plot.

Despite the miscellaneous and mongrel tribes that had forced their settlements in the City of the Cæsars, the Roman population retained an inordinate notion of their own supremacy over the rest of the world ; and, degenerated from the iron virtues of the Republic,

possessed all the insolent and unruly turbulence which characterised the *Plebs* of the ancient Forum. Amongst a ferocious, yet not a brave populace, the nobles supported themselves less as sagacious tyrants than as relentless banditti. The popes had struggled in vain against these stubborn and stern patricians. Their state derided, their command defied, their persons publicly outraged, the pontiff-sovereigns of the rest of Europe resided at the Vatican as prisoners under terror of execution. When, thirty-eight years before the date of the events we are about to witness, a Frenchman, under the name of Clement V., had ascended the chair of St Peter, the new pope, with more prudence than valour, had deserted Rome for the tranquil retreat of Avignon; and the luxurious town of a foreign province became the court of the Roman pontiff, and the throne of the Christian Church.

Thus deprived of even the nominal check of the papal presence, the power of the nobles might be said to have no limits, save their own caprice, or their mutual jealousies and feuds. Though arrogating through fabulous genealogies their descent from the ancient Romans, they were, in reality, for the most part, the sons of the bolder barbarians of the North; and, contaminated by the craft of Italy, rather than imbued with its national affections, they retained the disdain of their foreign ancestors for a conquered soil and a degenerate people. While the rest of Italy, especially in Florence, in Venice, and in Milan, was fast and far advancing beyond the other states of Europe in civili-

sation and in art, the Romans appeared rather to recede than to improve;—unblest by laws, unvisited by art, strangers at once to the chivalry of a warlike, and the graces of a peaceful, people. But they still possessed the sense and desire of liberty, and, by ferocious paroxysms and desperate struggles, sought to vindicate for their city the title it still assumed of “the Metropolis of the World.” For the last two centuries they had known various revolutions,—brief, often bloody, and always unsuccessful. Still, there was the empty pageant of a popular form of government. The thirteen quarters of the city named each a chief; and the assembly of these magistrates, called Caporioni, by theory possessed an authority they had neither the power nor the courage to exert. Still there was the proud name of Senator; but, at the present time, the office was confined to one or to two persons, sometimes elected by the pope, sometimes by the nobles. The authority attached to the name seems to have had no definite limit; it was that of a stern dictator, or an indolent puppet, according as he who held it had the power to enforce the dignity he assumed. It was never conceded but to nobles, and it was by the nobles that all the outrages were committed. Private enmity alone was gratified whenever public justice was invoked: and the vindication of order was but the execution of revenge.

Holding their palaces as the castles and fortresses of princes, each asserting his own independency of all authority and law, and planting fortifications, and claim-

ing principalities in the patrimonial territories of the church, the barons of Rome made their state still more secure, and still more odious, by the maintenance of troops of foreign (chiefly of German) mercenaries, at once braver in disposition, more disciplined in service, and more skilful in arms, than even the freest Italians of that time. Thus they united the judicial and the military force, not for the protection, but for the ruin of Rome. Of these barons, the most powerful were the Orsini and Colonna; their feuds were hereditary and incessant, and every day witnessed the fruits of their lawless warfare, in bloodshed, in rape, and in conflagration. The flattery or the friendship of Petrarch, too credulously believed by modern historians, has invested the Colonna, especially of the date now entered upon, with an elegance and a dignity not their own. Outrage, fraud, and assassination, a sordid avarice in securing lucrative offices to themselves, an insolent oppression of their citizens, and the most dastardly cringing to power superior to their own (with but few exceptions), mark the character of the first family of Rome. But, wealthier than the rest of the barons, they were, therefore, more luxurious, and perhaps more intellectual; and their pride was flattered in being patrons of those arts of which they could never have become the professors. From these multiplied oppressors the Roman citizens turned with fond and impatient regret to their ignorant and dark notions of departed liberty and greatness. They confounded the times of the Empire with those of the Republic; and often looked to the Teutonic

king, who obtained his election from beyond the Alps, but his *title* of emperor from the Romans, as the deserter of his legitimate trust and proper home; vainly imagining that, if both the emperor and the pontiff fixed their residence in Rome, Liberty and Law would again seek their natural shelter beneath the resuscitated majesty of the Roman people.

The absence of the pope and the papal court served greatly to impoverish the citizens; and they had suffered yet more visibly by the depredations of hordes of robbers, numerous and unsparing, who infested Romagna, obstructing all the public ways, and were, sometimes secretly, sometimes openly, protected by the barons, who often recruited their banditti garrisons by banditti soldiers.

But besides the lesser and ignobler robbers, there had risen in Italy a far more formidable description of freebooters. A German, who assumed the lofty title of the Duke Werner, had, a few years prior to the period we approach, enlisted and organized a considerable force, styled "The Great Company," with which he besieged cities and invaded states, without any object less shameless than that of pillage. His example was soon imitated; numerous "Companies," similarly constituted, devastated the distracted and divided land. They appeared suddenly raised, as if by magic, before the walls of a city, and demanded immense sums as the purchase of peace. Neither tyrant nor commonwealth maintained a force sufficient to resist them; and if other northern mercenaries were engaged to oppose them, it

was only to recruit the standards of the freebooters with deserters. Mercenary fought not mercenary—nor German, German: and greater pay, and more unbridled rapine, made the tents of the “Companies” far more attractive than the regulated stipends of a city, or the dull fortress and impoverished coffers of a chief. Werner, the most implacable and ferocious of all these adventurers, and who had so openly gloried in his enormities as to wear upon his breast a silver plate, engraved with the words “Enemy to God, to Pity, and to Mercy,” had not long since ravaged Romagna with fire and sword. But, whether induced by money, or unable to control the fierce spirits he had raised, he afterwards led the bulk of his company back to Germany. Small detachments, however, remained, scattered throughout the land, waiting only an able leader once more to reunite them: amongst those who appeared most fitted for that destiny was Walter de Montreal, a Knight of St John, and gentleman of Provence, whose valour and military genius had already, though yet young, raised his name into dreaded celebrity; and whose ambition, experience, and sagacity, relieved by certain chivalric and noble qualities, were suited to enterprises far greater and more important than the violent depredations of the atrocious Werner. From these scourges, no state had suffered more grievously than Rome. The patrimonial territories of the pope,—in part wrested from him by petty tyrants, in part laid waste by these foreign robbers,—yielded but a scanty supply to the necessities of Clement VI., the most

accomplished gentleman and the most graceful voluptuary of his time ; and the good father had devised a plan, whereby to enrich at once the Romans and their pontiff.

Nearly fifty years before the time we enter upon, in order both to replenish the papal coffers and pacify the starving Romans, Boniface VIII. had instituted the Festival of the Jubilee, or Holy Year ; in fact, a revival of a Pagan ceremonial. A plenary indulgence was promised to every Catholic who, in that year, and in the first year of every succeeding century, should visit the churches of St Peter and St Paul. An immense concourse of pilgrims, from every part of Christendom, had attested the wisdom of the invention ; “and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect without counting the heaps of gold and silver that were poured on the altar of St Paul.”*

It is not to be wondered at that this most lucrative festival should, ere the next century was half expired, appear to a discreet pontiff to be too long postponed. And both pope and city agreed in thinking it might well bear a less distant renewal. Accordingly, Clement VI. had proclaimed, under the name of the *Mosaic Jubilee*, a second Holy Year for 1350—viz., three years distant from that date at which, in the next chapter, my narrative will commence. This circumstance had a great effect in whetting the popular indignation against the barons, and preparing the events I shall relate ; for the roads were, as I before said, in-

* Gibbon, vol. xii. c. 59.

fested by the banditti, the creatures and allies of the barons. And if the roads were not cleared, the pilgrims might not attend. It was the object of the pope's vicar, Raimond, bishop of Orvietto (bad politician and good canonist), to seek, by every means, to remove all impediment between the offerings of devotion and the treasury of St Peter.

Such, in brief, was the state of Rome at the period we are about to examine. Her ancient mantle of renown still, in the eyes of Italy and of Europe, cloaked her ruins. In name, at least, she was still the queen of the earth ; and from her hands came the crown of the emperor of the north, and the keys of the father of the church. Her situation was precisely that which presented a vast and glittering triumph to bold ambition,—an inspiring, if mournful spectacle to determined patriotism,—and a fitting stage for that more august tragedy which seeks its incidents, selects its actors, and shapes its moral, amidst the vicissitudes and crimes of nations.

CHAPTER III.

The Brawl.

ON an evening in April 1347, and in one of those wide spaces in which Modern and Ancient Rome seemed blent together—equally desolate and equally in ruins—a miscellaneous and indignant populace were assembled. That morning the house of a Roman jeweller had been forcibly entered and pillaged by the soldiers of Martino di Porto, with a daring effrontery which surpassed even the ordinary licence of the barons. The sympathy and sensation throughout the city were deep and ominous.

“Never will I submit to this tyranny!”

“Nor I!”

“Nor I!”

“Nor, by the bones of St Peter, will I!”

“And what, my friends, is this tyranny to which you will not submit?” said a young nobleman, addressing himself to the crowd of citizens who, heated, angry, half-armed, and with the vehement gestures of Italian passion, were now sweeping down the long and narrow street that led to the gloomy quarter occupied by the Orsini.

“Ah, my lord!” cried two or three of the citizens in a breath; “you will right us—you will see justice done to us—you are a Colonna.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed scornfully one man of gigantic frame, and wielding on high a huge hammer, indicative of his trade. “Justice and Colonna! body of God! those names are not often found together.”

“Down with him! down with him! he is an Orsini,—down with him!” cried at least ten of the throng: but no hand was raised against the giant.

“He speaks the truth,” said a second voice, firmly.

“Ay, that doth he,” said a third, knitting his brows, and unsheathing his knife, “and we will abide by it. The Orsini are tyrants—and the Colonnas are, at the best, as bad.”

“Thou liest in thy teeth, ruffian!” cried the young noble, advancing into the press and confronting the last asperser of the Colonna.

Before the flashing eye and menacing gesture of the cavalier, the worthy brawler retreated some steps, so as to leave an open space between the towering form of the smith, and the small, slender, but vigorous frame of the young noble.

Taught from their birth to despise the courage of the plebeians, even while careless of much reputation as to their own, the patricians of Rome were not unaccustomed to the rude fellowship of these brawls; nor was it unoften that the mere presence of a noble sufficed to scatter whole crowds, that had the moment before been breathing vengeance against his order and his house.

Waving his hand, therefore, to the smith, and utterly unheeding either his brandished weapon or his vast stature, the young Adrian di Castello, a distant kinsman of the Colonna, haughtily bade him give way.

“To your homes, friends! and know,” he added, with some dignity, “that ye wrong us much if ye imagine we share the evil-doings of the Orsini, or are pandering solely to our own passions in the feud between their house and ours. May the Holy Mother so judge me,” continued he, devoutly lifting up his eyes, “as I now with truth declare, that it is for your wrongs, and for the wrongs of Rome, that I have drawn this sword against the Orsini.”

“So say all the tyrants,” rejoined the smith, hardily, as he leant his hammer against a fragment of stone—some remnant of ancient Rome—“they never fight against each other, but it is for our good. One Colonna cuts me the throat of Orsini’s baker—it is for our good! another Colonna seizes on the daughter of Orsini’s tailor—it is for our good! *our* good—yes, for the good of the people!—the good of the bakers and tailors, eh?”

“Fellow,” said the young nobleman, gravely, “if a Colonna did thus, he did wrong; but the holiest cause may have bad supporters.”

“Yes, the holy Church itself is propped on very indifferent columns,” answered the smith, in a rude witicism on the affection of the pope for the Colonna.

“He blasphemes! the smith blasphemes!” cried the partisans of that powerful house. “A Colonna, a Colonna!”

“An Orsini, an Orsini!” was no less promptly the counter cry.

“THE PEOPLE!” shouted the smith, waving his formidable weapon far above the heads of the group.

In an instant the whole throng, who had at first united against the aggression of one man, were divided by the hereditary wrath of faction. At the cry of Orsini, several new partisans hurried to the spot; the friends of the Colonna drew themselves on one side—the defenders of the Orsini on the other—and the few who agreed with the smith that both factions were equally odious, and the people was the sole legitimate cry in a popular commotion, would have withdrawn themselves from the approaching *mêlée*, if the smith himself, who was looked upon by them as an authority of great influence, had not—whether from resentment at the haughty bearing of the young Colonna, or from an appetite of contest not uncommon in men of a bulk and force which assures them in all personal affrays the lofty pleasure of superiority—if, I say, the smith himself had not, after a pause of indecision, retired among the Orsini, and entrained, by his example, the alliance of his friends with the favourers of that faction.

In popular commotions, each man is whirled along with the herd, often half against his own approbation or assent. The few words of peace by which Adrian di Castello commenced an address to his friends were drowned amidst their shouts. Proud to find in their ranks one of the most beloved, and one of the noblest

of that name, the partisans of the Colonna placed him in their front, and charged impetuously on their foes. Adrian, however, who had acquired from circumstances something of that chivalrous code which he certainly could not have owed to his Roman birth, disdained at first to assault men among whom he recognised no equal, either in rank or the practice of arms. He contented himself with putting aside the few strokes that were aimed at him in the gathering confusion of the conflict—few; for those who recognised him, even amidst the bitterest partisans of the Orsini, were not willing to expose themselves to the danger and odium of spilling the blood of a man, who, in addition to his great birth and the terrible power of his connections, was possessed of a personal popularity, which he owed rather to a comparison with the vices of his relatives than to any remarkable virtues hitherto displayed by himself. The smith alone, who had as yet taken no active part in the fray, seemed to gather himself up in determined opposition as the cavalier now advanced within a few steps of him.

“Did we not tell thee,” quoth the giant, frowning, “that the Colonna were, not less than the Orsini, the foes of the people? Look at thy followers and clients: are they not cutting the throats of humble men by way of vengeance for the crime of a great one? But that is the way one patrician always scourges the insolence of another. He lays the rod on the backs of the people, and then cries, ‘See how just I am!’”

“I do not answer thee now,” answered Adrian;

“but if thou regrettest with me this waste of blood, join with me in attempting to prevent it.”

“I—not I ! let the blood of the slaves flow to-day : the time is fast coming when it shall be washed away by the blood of the lords.”

“Away, ruffian !” said Adrian, seeking no further parley, and touching the smith with the flat side of his sword. In an instant the hammer of the smith swung in the air, and, but for the active spring of the young noble, would infallibly have crushed him to the earth. Ere the smith could gain time for a second blow, Adrian’s sword passed twice through his right arm, and the weapon fell heavily to the ground.

“Slay him, slay him !” cried several of the clients of the Colonna, now pressing, dastard-like, round the disarmed and disabled smith.

“Ay, slay him !” said, in tolerable Italian, but with a barbarous accent, one man, half-clad in armour, who had but just joined the group, and who was one of those wild German bandits whom the Colonna held in their pay ; “he belongs to a horrible gang of miscreants sworn against all order and peace. He is one of Rienzi’s followers, and, bless the Three Kings ! raves about the People.”

“Thou sayest right, barbarian,” said the sturdy smith, in a loud voice, and tearing aside the vest from his breast with his left hand ; “come all—Colonna and Orsini—dig to this heart with your sharp blades, and when you have reached the centre, you will find

there the object of your common hatred—‘Rienzi and the People!’”

As he uttered these words, in language that would have seemed above his station (if a certain glow and exaggeration of phrase and sentiment were not common, when excited, to all the Romans), the loudness of his voice rose above the noise immediately round him, and stilled, for an instant, the general din; and when, at last, the words “Rienzi and the People” rang forth, they penetrated midway through the increasing crowd, and were answered as by an echo, with a hundred voices—“Rienzi and the People!”

But whatever impression the words of the mechanic made on others, it was equally visible in the young Colonna. At the name of Rienzi the glow of excitement vanished from his cheek; he started back, muttered to himself, and for a moment seemed, even in the midst of that stirring commotion, to be lost in a moody and distant reverie. He recovered, as the shout died away; and saying to the smith, in a low tone, “Friend, I am sorry for thy wound; but seek me on the morrow, and thou shalt find thou hast wronged me;” he beckoned to the German to follow him, and threaded his way through the crowd, which generally gave back as he advanced. For the bitterest hatred to the order of the nobles was at that time in Rome mingled with a servile respect for their persons, and a mysterious awe of their uncontrollable power.

As Adrian passed through that part of the crowd in which the fray had not yet commenced, the murmurs

that followed him were not those which many of his race could have heard.

“A Colonna,” said one.

“Yet no ravisher,” said another, laughing wildly.

“Nor murtherer,” muttered a third, pressing his hand to his breast. “’Tis not against *him* that my father’s blood cries aloud.”

“Bless him,” said a fourth, “for as yet no man curses him.”

“Ah, God help us !” said an old man, with a long grey beard, leaning on his staff : “the serpent’s young yet; the fangs will show by-and-by.”

“For shame, father ! he is a comely youth, and not proud in the least. What a smile he hath !” quoth a fair matron, who kept on the outskirts of the *mêlée*.

“Farewell to a man’s honour when a noble smiles on his wife !” was the answer.

“Nay,” said Luigi, a jolly butcher, with a roguish eye, “what a man can win fairly from maid or wife, that let him do, whether plebeian or noble—that’s my morality ; but when an ugly old patrician finds fair words will not win fair looks, and carries me off a dame on the back of a German boar, with a stab in the side for comfort to the spouse,—then, I say, he is a wicked man, and an adulterer.”

While such were the comments and the murmurs that followed the noble, very different were the looks and words that attended the German soldier.

Equally, nay, with even greater promptitude, did the crowd make away at his armed and heavy tread ; but

not with looks of reverence:—the eye glared as he approached; but the cheek grew pale—the head bowed—the lip quivered; each man felt a shudder of hate and fear, as recognising a dread and mortal foe. And well and wrathfully did the fierce mercenary note the signs of the general aversion. He pushed on rudely—half-smiling in contempt, half-frowning in revenge, as he looked from side to side; and his long, matted, light hair, tawny-coloured moustache, and brawny front, contrasted strongly with the dark eyes, raven locks, and slender frames of the Italians.

“May Lucifer double damn those German cut-throats!” muttered, between his grinded teeth, one of the citizens.

“Amen!” answered, heartily, another.

“Hush!” said a third, timorously looking round: “if one of them hear thee, thou art a lost man.”

“Oh, Rome! Rome! to what art thou fallen!” said bitterly one citizen, clothed in black, and of a higher seeming than the rest; “when thou shudderest in thy streets at the tread of a hired barbarian!”

“Hark to one of our learned men, and rich citizens!” said the butcher, reverently.

“’Tis a friend of Rienzi’s,” quoth another of the group, lifting his cap.

With downcast eyes, and a face in which grief, shame, and wrath, were visibly expressed, Pandulfo di Guido, a citizen of birth and repute, swept slowly through the crowd and disappeared.

Meanwhile Adrian, having gained a street which,

though in the neighbourhood of the crowd, was empty and desolate, turned to his fierce comrade. "Rodolf!" said he, "mark!—no violence to the citizens. Return to the crowd, collect the friends of our house, withdraw them from the scene: let not the Colonna be blamed for this day's violence; and assure our followers, in my name, that I swear, by the knighthood I received at the emperor's hands, that by my sword shall Martino di Porto be punished for his outrage. Fain would I, in person, allay the tumult, but my presence only seems to sanction it. Go—thou hast weight with them all."

"Ay, signor, the weight of blows!" answered the grim soldier. "But the command is hard; I would fain let their puddle-blood flow an hour or two longer. Yet, pardon me: in obeying thy orders, do I obey those of my master, thy kinsman? it is old Stephen Colonna—who seldom spares blood or treasure, God bless him—(save his own!) whose money I hold, and to whose hests I am sworn."

"Diavolo!" muttered the cavalier, and the angry spot was on his cheek; but, with the habitual self-control of the Italian nobles, he smothered his rising choler, and said aloud, with calmness, but dignity—

"Do as I bid thee; check this tumult—make *us* the forbearing party. Let all be still within one hour hence, and call on me to-morrow for thy reward; be this purse an earnest of my future thanks. As for my kinsman, whom I command thee to name more reverently, 'tis in his name I speak. Hark! the din in-

creases — the contest swells—go—lose not another moment.”

Somewhat awed by the quiet firmness of the patrician, Rodolf nodded, without answer, slid the money into his bosom, and stalked away into the thickest of the throng. But, even ere he arrived, a sudden reaction had taken place.

The young cavalier, left alone in that spot, followed with his eyes the receding form of the mercenary, as the sun, now setting, shone slant upon his glittering casque, and said bitterly to himself—“Unfortunate city—fountain of all mighty memories—fallen queen of a thousand nations—how art thou decrowned and spoiled by thy recreant and apostate children! Thy nobles divided against themselves—thy people cursing thy nobles—thy priests, who should sow peace, planting discord—the father of thy church deserting thy stately walls, his home a refuge, his mitre a fief, his court a Gallic village—and we! we, of the haughtiest blood of Rome—we, the sons of Cæsars, and of the lineage of demigods, guarding an insolent and abhorred state by the swords of hirelings, who mock our cowardice while they receive our pay—who keep our citizens slaves, and lord it over their very masters in return! Oh, that we the hereditary chiefs of Rome, could but feel—oh, that we could but find our only legitimate safeguard in the grateful hearts of our countrymen!”

So deeply did the young Adrian feel the galling truth of all he uttered, that the indignant tears rolled

down his cheeks as he spoke. He felt no shame as he dashed them away ; for that weakness which weeps for a fallen race, is the tenderness not of women but of angels.

As he turned slowly to quit the spot, his steps were suddenly arrested by a loud shout : “ Rienzi ! Rienzi ! ” smote the air. From the walls of the Capitol to the bed of the glittering Tiber, that name echoed far and wide ; and, as the shout died away, it was swallowed up in a silence so profound, so universal, so breathless, that you might have imagined that death itself had fallen over the city. And now, at the extreme end of the crowd, and elevated above their level, on vast fragments of stone which had been dragged from the ruins of Rome in one of the late frequent tumults between contending factions, to serve as a barricade for citizens against citizens,—on these silent memorials of the past grandeur, the present misery, of Rome, stood that extraordinary man, who, above all his race, was the most penetrated with the glories of the one time, with the degradation of the other.

From the distance at which he stood from the scene, Adrian could only distinguish the dark outline of Rienzi’s form ; he could only hear the faint sound of his mighty voice ; he could only perceive, in the subdued yet waving sea of human beings that spread around, their heads bared in the last rays of the sun, the unutterable effect which an eloquence, described by contemporaries almost as miraculous,—but in reality less so from the genius of the man than the sympathy

of the audience,—created in all, who drank into their hearts and souls the stream of its burning thoughts.

It was but for a short time that that form was visible to the earnest eye, that that voice at intervals reached the straining ear, of Adrian di Castello ; but that time sufficed to produce all the effect which Adrian himself had desired.

Another shout, more earnest, more prolonged, than the first—a shout, in which spoke the release of swelling thoughts, of intense excitement—betokened the close of the harangue ; and then you might see, after a minute's pause, the crowd breaking in all directions, and pouring down the avenues in various knots and groups, each testifying the strong and lasting impression made upon the multitude by that address. Every cheek was flushed—every tongue spoke : the animation of the orator had passed, like a living spirit, into the breasts of the audience. He had thundered against the disorders of the patricians, yet, by a word, he had disarmed the anger of the plebeians—he had preached freedom, yet he had opposed licence. He had calmed the present by a promise of the future. He had chid their quarrels, yet had supported their cause. He had mastered the revenge of to-day by a solemn assurance that there should come justice for the morrow. So great may be the power, so mighty the eloquence, so formidable the genius, of one man,—without arms, without rank, without sword or ermine, who addresses himself to a people that is oppressed !

CHAPTER IV.

An Adventure.

AVOIDING the broken streams of the dispersed crowd, Adrian Colonna strode rapidly down one of the narrow streets leading to his palace, which was situated at no inconsiderable distance from the place in which the late contest had occurred. The education of his life made him feel a profound interest, not only in the divisions and disputes of his country, but also in the scene he had just witnessed, and the authority exercised by Rienzi.

An orphan of a younger, but opulent branch of the Colonna, Adrian had been brought up under the care and guardianship of his kinsman, that astute, yet valiant Stephen Colonna, who, of all the nobles of Rome, was the most powerful, alike from the favour of the pope, and the number of armed hirelings whom his wealth enabled him to maintain. Adrian had early manifested what in that age was considered an extraordinary disposition towards intellectual pursuits, and had acquired much of the little that was then known of the ancient language and the ancient history of his country.

Though Adrian was but a boy at the time in which, first presented to the reader, he witnessed the emotions of Rienzi at the death of his brother, his kind heart had been penetrated with sympathy for Cola's affliction, and shame for the apathy of his kinsmen at the result of their own feuds. He had earnestly sought the friendship of Rienzi, and, despite his years, had become aware of the power and energy of his character. But though Rienzi, after a short time, had appeared to think no more of his brother's death—though he again entered the halls of the Colonna, and shared their disdainful hospitalities, he maintained a certain distance and reserve of manner, which even Adrian could only partially overcome. He rejected every offer of service, favour, or promotion; and any unwonted proof of kindness from Adrian seemed, instead of making him more familiar, to offend him into colder distance. The easy humour and conversational vivacity which had first rendered him a welcome guest with those who passed their lives between fighting and feasting, had changed into a vein ironical, cynical, and severe. But the dull barons were equally amused at his wit, and Adrian was almost the only one who detected the serpent couched beneath the smile.

Often Rienzi sat at the feast, silent, but observant, as if watching every look, weighing every word, taking gauge and measurement of the intellect, policy, temperament, of every guest; and when he had seemed to satisfy himself, his spirits would rise, his words flow,

and while his dazzling but bitter wit lit up the revel, none saw that the unmirthful flash was the token of the coming storm. But all the while, he neglected no occasion to mix with the humbler citizens, to stir up their minds, to inflame their imaginations, to kindle their emulation, with pictures of the present and with legends of the past. He grew in popularity and repute, and was yet more in power with the herd, because in favour with the nobles. Perhaps it was for that reason that he had continued the guest of the Colonna.

When, six years before the present date, the Capitol of the Cæsars witnessed the triumph of Petrarch, the scholastic fame of the young Rienzi had attracted the friendship of the poet,—a friendship that continued with slight interruption, to the last, through careers so widely different; and afterwards, one among the Roman deputies to Avignon, he had been conjoined with Petrarch* to supplicate Clement VI. to remove the Holy See from Avignon to Rome. It was in this mission that, for the first time, he evinced his extraordinary powers of eloquence and persuasion. The pontiff, indeed, more desirous of ease than glory, was not convinced by the arguments, but he was enchanted with the pleader; and Rienzi returned to Rome, loaded with honours, and clothed with the dignity of

* According to the modern historians; but it seems more probable that Rienzi's mission to Avignon was posterior to that of Petrarch. However this be, it was at Avignon that Petrarch and Rienzi became most intimate, as Petrarch himself observes in one of his letters.

high and responsible office. No longer the inactive scholar, the gay companion, he rose at once to pre-eminence above all his fellow-citizens. Never before had authority been borne with so austere an integrity, so uncorrupt a zeal. He had sought to impregnate his colleagues with the same loftiness of principle—he had failed. Now secure in his footing, he had begun openly to appeal to the people; and already a new spirit seemed to animate the populace of Rome.

While these were the fortunes of Rienzi, Adrian had been long separated from him, and absent from Rome.

The Colonna were stanch supporters of the imperial party, and Adrian di Castello had received and obeyed an invitation to the emperor's court. Under that monarch he had initiated himself in arms, and, among the knights of Germany, he had learned to temper the natural Italian shrewdness with the chivalry of northern valour.

In leaving Bavaria, he had sojourned a short time in the solitude of one of his estates by the fairest lake of northern Italy; and thence, with a mind improved alike by action and study, had visited many of the free Italian states, imbibed sentiments less prejudiced than those of his order, and acquired an early reputation for himself while inly marking the characters and deeds of others. In him, the best qualities of the Italian noble were united. Passionately addicted to the cultivation of letters, subtle and profound in policy, gentle and bland of manner, dignifying a love

of pleasure with a certain elevation of taste, he yet possessed a gallantry of conduct, and purity of honour, and an aversion from cruelty, which were then very rarely found in the Italian temperament, and which even the Chivalry of the North, while maintaining among themselves, usually abandoned the moment they came into contact with the systematic craft and disdain of honesty, which made the character of the ferocious, yet wily, South. With these qualities he combined, indeed, the softer passions of his countrymen—he adored Beauty, and he made a deity of Love.

He had but a few weeks returned to his native city, whither his reputation had already preceded him, and where his early affection for letters and gentleness of bearing were still remembered. He returned to find the position of Rienzi far more altered than his own. Adrian had not yet sought the scholar. He wished first to judge with his own eyes, and at a distance, of the motives and object of his conduct; for partly he caught the suspicions which his own order entertained of Rienzi, and partly he shared in the trustful enthusiasm of the people.

“Certainly,” said he now to himself, as he walked musingly onward, “certainly, no man has it more in his power to reform our diseased state, to heal our divisions, to awaken our citizens to the recollections of ancestral virtue. But that very power, how dangerous is it! Have I not seen, in the free states of Italy, men, called into authority for the sake of preserving the people, honest themselves at first, and then, drunk

with the sudden rank, betraying the very cause which had exalted them? True, those men were chiefs and nobles; but are plebeians less human? Howbeit I have heard and seen enough from afar,—I will now approach and examine the man himself.”

While thus soliloquising, Adrian but little noted the various passengers, who, more and more rarely as the evening waned, hastened homeward. Among these were two females, who now alone shared with Adrian the long and gloomy street into which he had entered. The moon was already bright in the heavens, and, as the women passed the cavalier with a light and quick step, the younger one turned back and regarded him by the clear light with an eager, yet timid glance.

“Why dost thou tremble my pretty one?” said her companion, who might have told some five-and-forty years, and whose garb and voice bespoke her of inferior rank to the younger female. “The streets seem quiet enough now, and, the Virgin be praised! we are not so far from home either.”

“Oh! Benedetta, it is *he*! it is the young signor—it is Adrian!”

“That is fortunate,” said the nurse, for such was her condition, “since they say he is as bold as a Northman: and as the Palazzo Colonna is not very far from hence, we shall be within reach of his aid should we want it; that is to say, sweet one, if you will walk a little slower than you have yet done.”

The young lady slackened her pace, and sighed.

“He is certainly very handsome,” quoth the nurse:

“but thou must not think more of him ; he is too far above thee for marriage, and for aught else thou art too honest and thy brother too proud——”

“And thou, Benedetta, art too quick with thy tongue. How canst thou talk thus, when thou knowest he hath never, since, at least, I was a mere child, even addressed me : nay, he scarce knows of my very existence. He, the Lord Adrian di Castello, dream of the poor Irene ! the mere thought is madness !”

“Then why,” said the nurse, briskly, “dost thou dream of *him* ?”

Her companion sighed again more deeply than at first.

“Holy St Catherine !” continued Benedetta, “if there were but one man in the world, I would die single ere I would think of him, until, at least, he had kissed my hand twice, and left it my own fault if it were not my lips instead.”

The young lady still replied not.

“But how didst thou contrive to love him ?” asked the nurse. “Thou canst not have seen him very often : it is but some four or five weeks since his return to Rome.”

“Oh, how dull art thou ?” answered the fair Irene. “Have I not told thee again and again, that I loved him six years ago ?”

“When thou hadst told but thy tenth year, and a doll would have been thy most suitable lover ! As I am a Christian, signora, thou hast made good use of thy time.”

“And during his absence,” continued the girl, fondly, yet sadly, “did I not hear him spoken of, and was not the mere sound of his name like a love-gift that bade me remember? And when they praised him, have I not rejoiced? and when they blamed him, have I not resented? and when they said that his lance was victorious in the tourney, did I not weep with pride? and when they whispered that his vows were welcome in the bower, wept I not as fervently with grief? Have not the six years of his absence been a dream, and was not his return a waking into light—a morning of glory and the sun? And I see him now in the church when he wots not of me; and on his happy steed as he passes by my lattice: and is not that enough of happiness for love?”

“But if he loves not *thee*!”

“Fool! I ask not that;—nay, I know not if I wish it. Perhaps I would rather dream of him, such as I would have him, than know him for what he is. He might be unkind, or ungenerous, or love me but little; rather would I not be loved at all, than loved coldly, and eat away my heart by comparing it with his. I can love him now as something abstract, unreal, and divine; but what would be my shame, my grief, if I were to find him less than I have imagined! Then, indeed, my life would have been wasted; then, indeed, the beauty of the earth would be gone!”

The good nurse was not very capable of sympathising with sentiments like these. Even had their characters been more alike, their disparity of age would have

rendered such sympathy impossible. What but youth can echo back the soul of youth—all the music of its wild vanities and romantic follies? The good nurse did not sympathise with the sentiments of her young lady, but she sympathised with the deep earnestness with which they were expressed. She thought it wondrous silly, but wondrous moving; she wiped her eyes with the corner of her veil, and hoped in her secret heart that her young charge would soon get a real husband to put such unsubstantial fantasies out of her head. There was a short pause in their conversation, when, just where two streets crossed one another, there was heard a loud noise of laughing voices and trampling feet. Torches were seen on high, affronting the pale light of the moon; and, at a very short distance from the two females, in the cross street, advanced a company of seven or eight men, bearing, as seen by the red light of the torches, the formidable badge of the Orsini.

Amidst the other disorders of the time, it was no unfrequent custom for the younger or more dissolute of the nobles, in small and armed companies, to parade the streets at night, seeking occasion for a licentious gallantry among the cowering citizens, or a skirmish at arms with some rival stragglers of their own order. Such a band had Irene and her companion now chanced to encounter.

“Holy mother!” cried Benedetta, turning pale, and half running, “what curse has befallen us? How

could we have been so foolish as to tarry so late at the lady Nina's ! Run, signora,—run, or we shall fall into their hands !”

But the advice of Benedetta came too late,—the fluttering garments of the women had been already descried : in a moment more they were surrounded by the marauders. A rude hand tore aside Benedetta's veil, and at sight of features, which, if time had not spared, it could never very materially injure, the rough aggressor cast the poor nurse against the wall with a curse, which was echoed by a loud laugh from his comrades.

“Thou hast a fine fortune in faces, Giuseppe !”

“Yes ; it was but the other day that he seized on a girl of sixty.”

“And then, by way of improving her beauty, cut her across the face with his dagger, because she was not sixteen !”

“Hush, fellows ! whom have we here ?” said the chief of the party, a man richly dressed, and who, though bordering upon middle age, had only the more accustomed himself to the excesses of youth ; as he spoke, he snatched the trembling Irene from the grasp of his followers. “Ho, there ! the torches ! *Oh che bella faccia !* what blushes—what eyes !—nay, look not down, pretty one ; thou needst not be ashamed to win the love of an Orsini—yes ; know the triumph thou hast achieved—it is Martino di Porto who bids thee smile upon him !”

“For the blest Mother's sake, release me ! Nay,

sir, this must not be—I am not unfriended—this insult shall not pass !”

“Hark to her silver chiding ; it is better than my best hound’s bay ! This adventure is worth a month’s watching. What ! will you not come ?—restive—shrieks, too !—Francesco, Pietro, ye are the gentlest of the band. Wrap her veil around her—muffle this music ;—so ! bear her before me to the palace, and to-morrow, sweet one, thou shalt go home with a basket of florins, which thou mayst say thou hast bought at market.”

But Irene’s shrieks, Irene’s struggles, had already brought succour to her side, and, as Adrian approached the spot, the nurse flung herself on her knees before him.

“Oh, sweet signor, for Christ’s grace, save us ! deliver my young mistress—her friends love you well ! We are all for the Colonna, my lord : yes, indeed, all for the Colonna ! Save the kin of your own clients, gracious signor !”

“It is enough that she is a woman,” answered Adrian ; adding, between his teeth, “and that an Orsini is her assailant.” He strode haughtily into the thickest of the group ; the servitors laid hands on their swords, but gave way before him as they recognised his person ; he reached the two men who had already seized Irene ; in one moment he struck the foremost to the ground, in another, he had passed his left arm round the light and slender form of the maiden, and stood confronting the Orsini with his drawn blade, which, however, he pointed to the ground.

“For shame, my lord—for shame!” said he, indignantly. “Will you force Rome to rise, to a man, against our order? Vex not too far the lion, chained though he be; war against *us* if ye will! draw your blades upon men, though they be of your own race, and speak your own tongue: but if ye would sleep at nights, and not dread the avenger’s gripe,—if ye would walk the market-place secure,—wrong not a Roman woman! Yes, the very walls around us preach to you the punishment of such a deed: for that offence fell the Tarquins,—for that offence were swept away the Decemvirs,—for that offence, if ye rush upon it, the blood of your whole house may flow like water. Cease, then, my lord, from this mad attempt, so unworthy your great name; cease, and thank even a Colonna that he has come between you and a moment’s frenzy!”

So noble, so lofty were the air and gesture of Adrian, as he thus spoke, that even the rude servitors felt a thrill of approbation and remorse—not so Martino di Porto. He had been struck with the beauty of the prey thus suddenly snatched from him; he had been accustomed to long outrage and to long impunity; the very sight, the very voice of a Colonna, was a blight to his eye and a discord to his ear: what, then, when a Colonna interfered with his lusts, and rebuked his vices?

“Pedant!” he cried, with quivering lips, “prate not to me of thy vain legends and gossip’s tales! think not to snatch from me my possession in another, when

thine own life is in my hands. Unhand the maiden ! throw down thy sword ! return home without further parley, or, by my faith, and the blades of my followers (look at them well !)—thou diest !”

“Signor,” said Adrian, calmly, yet while he spoke he retreated gradually with his fair burthen towards the neighbouring wall, so as at least to leave only his front exposed to those fearful odds : “Thou wilt not so misuse the present chances, and wrong thyself in men’s mouths, as to attack with eight swords even thy hereditary foe, thus cumbered, too, as he is. But—nay, hold !—if thou art so disposed, bethink thee well, one cry of my voice would soon turn the odds against thee. Thou art now in the quarter of my tribe ; thou art surrounded by the habitations of the Colonna : yon palace swarms with men who sleep not, save with harness on their backs ; men whom my voice can reach even now, but from whom, if they once taste of blood, it could not save thee !”

“He speaks true, noble lord,” said one of the band : “we have wandered too far out of our beat ; we are in their very den ; the palace of old Stephen Colonna is within call ; and, to my knowledge,” added he, in a whisper, “eighteen fresh men-at-arms—ay, and Northmen too—marched through its gates this day.”

“Were there eight hundred men-at-arm’s length,” answered Martino, furiously, “I would not be thus bearded amidst mine own train ! Away with yon woman ! To the attack ! to the attack !”

Thus saying, he made a desperate lunge at Adrian,

who, having kept his eye cautiously on the movements of his enemy, was not unprepared for the assault. As he put aside the blade with his own, he shouted with a loud voice—"Colonna! to the rescue, Colonna!"

Nor had it been without an ulterior object that the acute and self-controlling mind of Adrian had hitherto sought to prolong the parley. Even as he first addressed Orsini, he had perceived, by the moonlight, the glitter of armour upon two men advancing from the far end of the street, and judged at once, by the neighbourhood, that they must be among the mercenaries of the Colonna.

Gently he suffered the form of Irene, which now—for she had swooned with the terror—pressed too heavily upon him, to slide from his left arm, and standing over her form, while sheltered from behind by the wall which he had so warily gained, he contented himself with parrying the blows hastily aimed at him, without attempting to retaliate. Few of the Romans, however accustomed to such desultory warfare, were then well and dexterously practised in the use of arms; and the science Adrian had acquired in the schools of the martial north, befriended him now, even against such odds. It is true, indeed, that the followers of Orsini did not share the fury of their lord; partly afraid of the consequence to themselves should the blood of so high-born a signor be spilt by their hands, partly embarrassed with the apprehension that they should see themselves suddenly beset with the ruthless hirelings so close within hearing, they struck but aimless and

random blows, looking every moment behind and aside, and rather prepared for flight than slaughter. Echoing the cry of "Colonna," poor Benedetta fled at the first clash of swords. She ran down the dreary street still shrieking that cry, and passed the very portals of Stephen's palace (where some grim forms yet loitered) without arresting her steps there, so great were her confusion and terror.

Meanwhile, the two armed men, whom Adrian had descried, proceeded leisurely up the street. The one was of a rude and common mould, his arms and his complexion testified his calling and race ; and by the great respect he paid to his companion, it was evident that that companion was no native of Italy ; for the brigands of the north, while they served the vices of the southern, scarce affected to disguise their contempt for his cowardice.

The companion of the brigand was a man of a martial, yet easy air. He wore no helmet, but a cap of crimson velvet, set off with a white plume ; on his mantle or surcoat, which was of scarlet, was wrought a broad white cross, both at back and breast ; and so brilliant was the polish of his corselet, that, as from time to time the mantle waved aside and exposed it to the moonbeams, it glittered like light itself.

"Nay, Rodolf," said he, "if thou hast so good a lot of it here with that hoary schemer, heaven forbid that I should wish to draw thee back again to our merry band. But tell me—this Rienzi—thinkest thou he has any solid and formidable power?"

“Pshaw! noble chieftain, not a whit of it. He pleases the mob; but as for the nobles, they laugh at him; and as for the soldiers, he has no money!”

“He pleases the mob, then!”

“Ay, that doth he; and when he speaks aloud to them, all the roar of Rome is hushed.”

“Humph!—when nobles are hated, and soldiers are bought, a mob may, in any hour, become the master. An honest people and a weak mob,—a corrupt people and a strong mob,” said the other, rather to himself than to his comrade, and scarce, perhaps, conscious of the eternal truth of his aphorism. “He is no mere brawler, this Rienzi, I suspect—I must see to it. Hark! what noise is that? By the Holy Sepulchre, it is the ring of our own metal!”

“And that cry—‘a Colonna!’” exclaimed Rodolph. “Pardon me, master,—I must away to the rescue!”

“Ay, it is the duty of thy hire: run;—yet stay, I will accompany thee, gratis for once, and from pure passion for mischief. By this hand, there is no music like clashing steel!”

Still Adrian continued gallantly and unwounded to defend himself, though his arm now grew tired, his breath well-nigh spent, and his eyes began to wink and reel beneath the glare of the tossing torches. Orsini himself, exhausted by his fury, had paused for an instant, fronting his foe with a heaving breast and savage looks, when, suddenly, his followers exclaimed, “Fly! fly!—the bandits approach—we are surrounded;”—and two of the survivors, without further parley,

took fairly to their heels. The other five remained irresolute, and waiting but the command of their master, when he of the white plume, whom I have just described, thrust himself into the *mêlée*.

“What! gentles,” said he, “have ye finished already? Nay, let us not mar the sport; begin again, I beseech you. What are the odds? Ho! six to one!—nay, no wonder that ye have waited for fairer play. See, we two will take the weaker side. Now then, let us begin again.”

“Insolent!” cried the Orsini. “Knowest thou him whom thou addressest thus arrogantly?—I am Martino di Porto. Who art thou?”

“Walter de Montreal, gentleman of Provence, and Knight of St John,” answered the other, carelessly.

At that redoubted name—the name of one of the boldest warriors, and of the most accomplished free-booter of his time—even Martino’s cheek grew pale, and his followers uttered a cry of terror.

“And this, my comrade,” continued the knight, “for we may as well complete the introduction, is probably better known to you than I am, gentles of Rome; and you doubtless recognise in him Rodolf of Saxony, a brave man and a true, where he is properly paid for his services.”

“Signor,” said Adrian to his enemy, who, aghast and dumb, remained staring vacantly at the two newcomers, “you are now in my power. See, our own people, too, are approaching.”

And, indeed, from the palace of Stephen Colonna,

torches began to blaze, and armed men were seen rapidly advancing to the spot.

“Go home in peace, and if, to-morrow, or any day more suitable to thee, thou wilt meet me alone, and lance to lance, as is the wont of the knights of the empire, or with band to band, and man for man, as is rather the Roman custom, I will not fail thee—there is my gage.”

“Nobly spoken,” said Montreal; “and if ye choose the latter, by your leave, I will be one of the party.”

Martino answered not; he took up the glove, thrust it in his bosom, and strode hastily away; only, when he had gone some paces down the street, he turned back, and shaking his clenched hand at Adrian, exclaimed, in a voice trembling with impotent rage—
“Faithful to death!”

The words made one of the mottoes of the Orsini; and, whatever its earlier signification, had long passed into a current proverb, to signify their hatred to the Colonna.

Adrian, now engaged in raising, and attempting to revive Irene, who was still insensible, disdainfully left it to Montreal to reply.

“I doubt not, signor,” said the latter, coolly, “that thou wilt be faithful to death: for Death, God wot, is the only contract which men, however ingenious, are unable to break or evade.”

“Pardon me, gentle knight,” said Adrian, looking up from his charge, “if I do not yet give myself

wholly to gratitude. I have learned enough of knight-hood to feel thou wilt acknowledge that my first duty is here——”

“Oh, a lady, then, was the cause of the quarrel! I need not ask who was in the right, when a man brings to the rivalry such odds as yon caitiff.”

“Thou mistakest a little, sir knight,—it is but a lamb I have rescued from the wolf.”

“For thy own table! Be it so!” returned the knight, gaily.

Adrian smiled gravely, and shook his head in denial. In truth, he was somewhat embarrassed by his situation. Though habitually gallant, he was not willing to expose to misconception the disinterestedness of his late conduct, and (for it was his policy to conciliate popularity) to sully the credit which his bravery would give him among the citizens, by conveying Irene (whose beauty, too, as yet, he had scarcely noted) to his own dwelling; and yet, in her present situation, there was no alternative. She evinced no sign of life. He knew not her home, nor parentage. Benedetta had vanished. He could not leave her in the streets; he could not resign her to the care of another; and, as she lay now upon his breast, he felt her already endeared to him, by that sense of protection which is so grateful to the human heart. He briefly, therefore, explained to those now gathered round him, his present situation, and the cause of the past conflict; and bade the torch-bearers precede him to his home.

“You, sir knight,” added he, turning to Montreal,

“if not already more pleasantly lodged, will, I trust, deign to be my guest.”

“Thanks, signor,” answered Montreal, maliciously, “but I, also, perhaps, have my own affairs to watch over. Adieu! I shall seek you at the earliest occasion. Fair night, and gentle dreams!

‘Robers Bertrams qui estoit tors
Mais à ceval estoit mult fors
Cil avoit o lui grans efforts
Multi ot ’homes per lui mors.’ ” *

And, muttering this rugged chant from the old “Roman de Rou,” the Provençal, followed by Rodolf, pursued his way.

The vast extent of Rome, and the thinness of its population, left many of the streets utterly deserted. The principal nobles were thus enabled to possess themselves of a wide range of buildings, which they fortified, partly against each other, partly against the people; their numerous relatives and clients lived around them, forming, as it were, petty courts and cities in themselves.

Almost opposite to the principal palace of the Colonna (occupied by his powerful kinsman, Stephen) was the mansion of Adrian. Heavily swung back the massive gates at his approach; he ascended the broad staircase, and bore his charge into an apartment which his tastes had decorated in a fashion not as yet common in that age. Ancient statues and busts were arranged around;

* An ill-favoured man, but a stout horseman, was Robert Bertram. Great deeds were his, and many a man died by his hand.

the pictured arras of Lombardy decorated the walls, and covered the massive seats.

“What ho ! Lights here, and wine !” cried the seneschal.

“Leave us alone,” said Adrian, gazing passionately on the pale cheek of Irene, as he now, by the clear light, beheld all its beauty ; and a sweet yet burning hope crept into his heart.

CHAPTER V.

The Description of a Conspirator, and the Dawn of the Conspiracy.

ALONE, by a table covered with various papers, sat a man in the prime of life. The chamber was low and long ; many antique and disfigured bas-reliefs and torsos were placed around the wall, interspersed, here and there, with the short sword and close casque, time-worn relics of the prowess of ancient Rome. Right above the table at which he sate, the moonlight streamed through a high and narrow casement—deep sunk in the massy wall. In a niche to the right of this window, guarded by a sliding-door, which was now partially drawn aside—but which, by its solid substance, and the sheet of iron with which it was plated, testified how valuable, in the eyes of the owner, was the treasure it protected—were ranged some thirty or forty volumes, then deemed no inconsiderable library ; and being, for the most part, the laborious copies in manuscript by the hand of the owner, from immortal originals.

Leaning his cheek on his hand, his brow somewhat knit, his lip slightly compressed, that personage indulged in meditations far other than the indolent dreams of scholars. As the high and still moonlight

shone upon his countenance, it gave an additional and solemn dignity to features which were naturally of a grave and majestic cast. Thick and auburn hair, the colour of which, not common to the Romans, was ascribed to his descent from the Teuton emperor, clustered in large curls above a high and expansive forehead; and even the present thoughtful compression of the brow could not mar the aspect of latent power which it derived from that great breadth between the eyes, in which the Grecian sculptors of old so admirably conveyed the expression of authority, and the silent energy of command. But his features were not cast in the Grecian, still less in the Teuton mould. The iron jaw, the aquiline nose, the somewhat sunken cheek, strikingly recalled the character of the hard Roman race, and might not inaptly have suggested to a painter a model for the younger Brutus.

The marked outline of the face, and the short, firm upper lip, were not concealed by the beard and mustachios usually then worn; and, in the faded portrait of the person now described, still extant at Rome, may be traced a certain resemblance to the popular pictures of Napoleon; not, indeed, in the features, which are more stern and prominent in the portrait of the Roman, but in that peculiar expression of concentrated and tranquil power which so nearly realises the ideal of intellectual majesty. Though still young, the personal advantages most peculiar to youth,—the bloom and glow, the rounded cheek in which care has not yet ploughed its lines, the full unsunken eye, and the

slender delicacy of frame,—these were not the characteristics of that solitary student. And though considered by his contemporaries as eminently handsome, the judgment was probably formed less from the more vulgar claims to such distinction, than from the height of the stature, an advantage at that time more esteemed than at present, and that nobler order of beauty which cultivated genius and commanding character usually stamp upon even homely features ;—the more rare in an age so rugged.

The character of Rienzi (for the youth presented to the reader in the first chapter of this history is now again before him in maturer years) had acquired greater hardness and energy with each stepping-stone to power. There was a circumstance attendant on his birth which had probably exercised great and early influence on his ambition. Though his parents were in humble circumstances, and of lowly calling, his father was the natural son of the Emperor, Henry VII. ;* and it was the pride of the parents that probably gave to Rienzi the unwonted advantages of education. This pride transmitted to himself,—his descent from royalty dinned into his ear, infused into his thoughts, from his cradle,—made him, even in his earliest youth, deem himself the equal of the Roman

* De Sade supposes that the *mother* of Rienzi was the daughter of an illegitimate son of Henry VII., supporting his opinion from a MS. in the Vatican. But, according to the contemporaneous biographer, Rienzi, in addressing Charles, king of Bohemia, claims the relationship from his father : “ Di vostro legnaggio sono—figlio di bastardo d’ Enrico imperatore,” &c. A more recent writer, il Padre Gabrini, cites an inscription in support of this descent : “ Nicolaus Tribunus . . . Laurentii Teutonici Filius,” &c.

signors, and half unconsciously aspire to be their superior. But, as the literature of Rome was unfolded to his eager eye and ambitious heart, he became imbued with that pride of country which is nobler than the pride of birth; and, save when stung by allusions to his origin, he unaffectedly valued himself more on being a Roman plebeian than the descendant of a Teutan king. His brother's death, and the vicissitudes he himself had already undergone, deepened the earnest and solemn qualities of his character; and at length all the faculties of a very uncommon intellect were concentrated into one object—which, borrowed from a mind strongly and mystically religious, as well as patriotic, a sacred aspect, and grew at once a duty and a passion.

“Yes,” said Rienzi, breaking suddenly from his reverie, “yes, the day is at hand when Rome shall rise again from her ashes; Justice shall dethrone Oppression; men shall walk safe in their ancient Forum. We will rouse from his forgotten tomb the indomitable soul of Cato! There shall be a *people* once more in Rome! And I—I shall be the instrument of that triumph—the restorer of my race! mine shall be the first voice to swell the battle-cry of freedom—mine the first hand to rear her banner—yes, from the height of my own soul as from a mountain, I see already rising the liberties and the grandeur of the New Rome; and on the corner-stone of the mighty fabric, posterity shall read my name.”

Uttering these lofty boasts, the whole person of the speaker seemed instinct with his ambition. He strode the gloomy chamber with light and rapid steps, as if on air; his breast heaved, his eyes glowed. He felt that love itself can scarcely bestow a rapture equal to that which is felt, in his first virgin enthusiasm, by a patriot who knows himself *sincere*!

There was a slight knock at the door, and the servant, in the rich liveries worn by the pope's officials,* presented himself.

"Signor," said he, "my lord the Bishop of Orvieto is without."

"Ha! that is fortunate. Lights there! My lord, this is an honour which I can estimate better than express."

"Tut, tut, my good friend," said the bishop, entering, and seating himself familiarly, "no ceremonies between the servants of the church; and never, I ween well, had she greater need of true friends than now. These unholy tumults, these licentious contentions, in the very shrines and city of St Peter, are sufficient to scandalise all Christendom."

"And so will it be," said Rienzi, "until his holiness himself shall be graciously persuaded to fix his residence in the seat of his predecessors, and curb with a strong arm the excesses of the nobles."

"Alas, man!" said the bishop, "thou knowest that these words are but as wind; for were the pope to fulfil

* Not the present hideous habiliments, which are said to have been the invention of Michael Angelo.

thy wishes, and remove from Avignon to Rome, by the blood of St Peter! he would not curb the nobles, but the nobles would curb him. Thou knowest well that until his blessed predecessor, of pious memory, conceived the wise design of escaping to Avignon, the Father of the Christian world was but like many other fathers in their old age, controlled and guarded by his rebellious children. Recollectest thou not how the noble Boniface himself, a man of great heart, and nerves of iron, was kept in thralldom by the ancestors of the Orsini—his entrances and exits made but at their will—so that, like a caged eagle, he beat himself against his bars and died? Verily, thou talkest of the memories of Rome—these are not the memories that are very attractive to popes.”

“Well,” said Rienzi, laughing gently, and drawing his seat nearer to the bishop’s; “my lord has certainly the best of the argument at present; and I must own, that strong, licentious, and unhallowed as the order of nobility was then, it is yet more so now.”

“Even I,” rejoined Raimond, colouring as he spoke, “though vicar of the pope, and representative of his spiritual authority, was, but three days ago, subjected to a coarse affront from that very Stephen Colonna who has ever received such favour and tenderness from the Holy See. His servitors jostled mine in the open streets, and I myself—I, the delegate of the sire of kings—was forced to draw aside to the wall, and wait until the hoary insolent swept by. Nor were blaspheming words wanting to complete the insult. ‘Par-

don, lord bishop,' said he, as he passed me; 'but this world, thou knowest, must necessarily take precedence of the other.'"

"Dared he so high?" said Rienzi, shading his face with his hand, as a very peculiar smile—scarcely itself joyous, though it made others gay, and which completely changed the character of his face, naturally grave even to sternness—played round his lips. "Then it is time for thee, holy father, as for us, to——"

"To what?" interrupted the bishop, quickly. "Can we effect aught? Dismiss thy enthusiastic dreamings—descend to the real earth—look soberly around us. Against men so powerful, what *can* we do?"

"My lord," answered Rienzi, gravely, "it is the misfortune of signors of your rank never to know the people, or the accurate signs of the time. As those who pass over the heights of mountains see the clouds sweep below, veiling the plains and valleys from their gaze, while they, only a little above the level, survey the movements and the homes of men; even so from your lofty eminence ye behold but the indistinct and sullen vapours—while from my humble station I see the preparations of the shepherds, to shelter themselves and herds from the storm which those clouds betoken. Despair not, my lord; endurance goes but to a certain limit—to that limit it is already stretched; Rome waits but the occasion (it will soon come, but not suddenly) to rise simultaneously against her oppressors."

The great secret of eloquence is to be in earnest—

the great secret of Rienzi's eloquence was in the mightiness of his enthusiasm. He never spoke as one who doubted of success. Perhaps, like most men who undertake high and great actions, he himself was never thoroughly aware of the obstacles in his way. He saw the end, bright and clear, and overleaped, in the vision of his soul, the crosses and the length of the path; thus the deep convictions of his own mind stamped themselves irresistibly upon others. He seemed less to promise than to prophecy.

The Bishop of Orvietto, not otherwise, yet a man of cool temperament and much worldly experience, was forcibly impressed by the energy of his companion; perhaps, indeed, the more so, inasmuch as his own pride and his own passions were also enlisted against the arrogance and license of the nobles. He paused ere he replied to Rienzi.

"But is it?" he asked at length, "only the plebeians who will rise? Thou knowest how they are caitiff and uncertain."

"My lord," answered Rienzi, "judge, by one fact, how strongly I am surrounded by friends of no common class: thou knowest how loudly I speak against the nobles—I cite them by their name—I beard the Savelli, the Orsini, the Colonna, in their very hearing. Thinkest thou that they forgive me? thinkest thou that, were only the plebeians my safeguard and my favourers, they would not seize me by open force?—that I had not long ere this found a gag in their dungeons, or been swallowed up in the eternal dumbness of the grave?"

Observe," continued he, as, reading the vicar's countenance, he perceived the impression he had made; "observe that throughout the whole world a great revolution has begun. The barbaric darkness of centuries has been broken; the KNOWLEDGE which made men as demigods in the past time has been called from her urn; a Power, subtler than brute force, and mightier than armed men, is at work; we have begun once more to do homage to the Royalty of Mind. Yes, that same Power which, a few years ago, crowned Petrarch in the Capitol, when it witnessed, after the silence of twelve centuries, the glories of a TRIUMPH,—which heaped upon a man of obscure birth, and unknown in arms, the same honours given of old to emperors and the vanquishers of kings,—which united in one act of homage even the rival houses of Colonna and Orsini,—which made the haughtiest patricians emulous to bear the train, to touch but the purple robe, of the son of the Florentine plebeian,—which still draws the eyes of Europe to the lowly cottage of Vacluse,—which gives to the humble student the all-acknowledged license to admonish tyrants, and approach, with haughty prayers, even the father of the Church;—yes, that same Power, which, working silently throughout Italy, murmurs under the solid base of the Venetian oligarchy;* which, beyond the Alps, has wakened into visible

* It was about eight years afterwards that the long-smothered hate of the Venetian people to that wisest and most vigilant of all oligarchies, the Sparta of Italy, broke out in the conspiracy under Marino Faliero.

and sudden life in Spain, in Germany, in Flanders; and which, even in that barbarous Isle, conquered by the Norman sword, ruled by the bravest of living kings,* has roused a spirit Norman cannot break—kings to rule over must rule by—yes, that same Power is everywhere abroad: it speaks, it conquers in the voice even of him who is before you; it unites in his cause all on whom but one glimmering of light has burst, all in whom one generous desire can be kindled! Know, lord vicar, that there is not a man in Rome, save our oppressors themselves—not a man who has learned one syllable of our ancient tongue—whose heart and sword are not with me. The peaceful cultivators of letters—the proud nobles of the second order—the rising race, wiser than their slothful sires; above all, my lord, the humbler ministers of religion, priests and monks, whom luxury hath not blinded, pomp hath not deafened, to the monstrous outrage to Christianity daily and nightly perpetrated in the Christian capital; these—all these,—are linked with the merchant and the artisan in one indissoluble bond, waiting but the signal to fall or to conquer, to live freemen, or to die martyrs, with Rienzi and their country!”

“Sayest thou so in truth!” said the bishop, startled, and half-rising. “Prove but thy words, and thou shalt

* Edward III., in whose reign opinions far more popular than those of the following century began to work. The civil wars threw back the action into the blood. It was indeed an age throughout the world which put forth abundant blossoms, but crude and unripened fruit;—a singular leap, followed by as singular a pause.

not find the ministers of God are less eager than their lay brethren for the happiness of men."

"What I say," rejoined Rienzi, in a cooler tone, "that can I show; but I may only prove it to those who will be with us."

"Fear me not," answered Raimond, "I know well the secret mind of his holiness, whose delegate and representative I am; and could he see but the legitimate and natural limit set to the power of the patricians, who, in their arrogance, have set at naught the authority of the Church itself, be sure that he would smile on the hand that drew the line. Nay, so certain of this am I, that if ye succeed, I, his responsible but unworthy vicar, will myself sanction the success. But beware of crude attempts; the Church must not be weakened by linking itself to failure."

"Right, my lord," answered Rienzi; "and in this, the policy of religion is that of freedom. Judge of my prudence by my long delay. He who can see all around him impatient—himself not less so—and yet suppress the signal and bide the hour, is not likely to lose his cause by rashness."

"More, then, of this anon," said the bishop, resettling himself in his seat. "As thy plans mature, fear not to communicate with me. Believe that Rome has no firmer friend than he who, ordained to preserve order, finds himself impotent against aggression. Meanwhile, to the object of my present visit, which links itself, in some measure, perhaps, with the topics on which we have conversed. . . . Thou knowest that when

his holiness intrusted thee with thy present office, he bade thee also announce his beneficent intention of granting a general Jubilee at Rome for the year 1350—a most admirable design for two reasons sufficiently apparent to thyself: first, that every Christian soul that may undertake the pilgrimage to Rome on that occasion, may thus obtain a general remission of sins; and secondly, because, to speak carnally, the concourse of pilgrims so assembled, usually, by the donations and offerings their piety suggests, very materially add to the revenues of the Holy See: at this time, by the way, in no very flourishing condition. This thou knowest, dear Rienzi.”

Rienzi bowed his head in assent, and the prelate continued—

“ Well, it is with the greatest grief that his holiness perceives that his pious intentions are likely to be frustrated: for so fierce and numerous are now the brigands in the public approaches to Rome, that, verily, the boldest pilgrim may tremble a little to undertake the journey; and those who do so venture will, probably, be composed of the poorest of the Christian community—men who, bringing with them neither gold, nor silver, nor precious offerings, will have little to fear from the rapacity of the brigands. Hence arise two consequences: on the one hand, the rich—whom Heaven knows, and the Gospel has, indeed, expressly declared, have the most need of a remission of sins—will be deprived of this glorious occasion for absolution; and, on the other hand, the coffers of the Church will be impiously

defrauded of that wealth which it would otherwise doubtless obtain from the zeal of her children."

"Nothing can be more logically manifest, my lord," said Rienzi.

The vicar continued—"Now, in letters received five days since from his holiness, he bade me expose these fearful consequences to Christianity to the various patricians who are legitimately fiefs of the Church, and command their resolute combination against the marauders of the road. With these have I conferred, and vainly."

"For by the aid, and from the troops of those very brigands, these patricians have fortified their palaces against each other," added Rienzi.

"Exactly for that reason," rejoined the bishop. "Nay, Stephen Colonna himself had the audacity to confess it. Utterly unmoved by the loss to so many precious souls, and, I may add, to the papal treasury, which ought to be little less dear to right-discerning men, they refuse to advance a step against the bandits. Now, then, hearken the second mandate of his holiness; —'Failing the nobles,' saith he, in his prophetic sagacity, 'confer with Cola di Rienzi. He is a bold man, and a pious, and, thou tellest me, of great weight with the people; and say to him, that if his wit can devise the method for extirpating these sons of Belial, and rendering a safe passage along the public ways, largely, indeed, will he merit at our hands—lasting will be the gratitude we shall owe to him; and whatever succour thou and the servants of our See can render to him, let it not be stinted.'"

“Said his holiness thus?” exclaimed Rienzi. “I ask no more—the gratitude is mine that he hath thought thus of his servant, and intrusted me with this charge; at once I accept it—at once I pledge myself to success. Let us, my lord, let us, then, clearly understand the limits ordained to my discretion. To curb the brigands without the walls, I must have authority over those within. If I undertake, at peril of my life, to clear all the avenues to Rome of the robbers who now infest it, shall I have full license for conduct bold, peremptory, and severe?”

“Such conduct the very nature of the charge demands,” replied Raimond.

“Ay—even though it be exercised against the arch offenders—against the supporters of the brigands—against the haughtiest of the nobles themselves?”

The bishop paused, and looked hard in the face of the speaker. “I repeat,” said he at length, sinking his voice, and with a significant tone, “in these bold attempts, success is the sole sanction. *Succeed*, and we will excuse thee all—even to the ——”

“Death of a Colonna or an Orsini, should justice demand it; and provided it be according to the law, and only incurred by the violation of the law!” added Rienzi, firmly.

The bishop did not reply in words, but a slight motion of his head was sufficient answer to Rienzi.

“My lord,” said he, “from this time, then, all is well; I date the revolution—the restoration of order, of the state—from this hour, this very conference. Till

now, knowing that justice must never wink upon great offenders, I had hesitated, through fear lest thou and his holiness might deem it severity, and blame him who replaces the law, because he smites the violators of law. Now I judge ye more rightly. Your hand, my lord."

The bishop extended his hand; Rienzi grasped it firmly, and then raised it respectfully to his lips. Both felt that the compact was sealed.

This conference, so long in recital, was short in the reality; but its object was already finished, and the bishop rose to depart. The outer portal of the house was opened, the numerous servitors of the bishop held on high their torches, and he had just turned from Rienzi, who had attended him to the gate, when a female passed hastily through the prelate's train, and starting as she beheld Rienzi, flung herself at his feet.

"Oh, hasten, sir! hasten, for the love of God, hasten! or the young signora is lost for ever!"

"The signora!—Heaven and earth, Benedetta, of whom do you speak?—of my sister—of Irene? is she not within?"

"Oh, sir—the Orsini—the Orsini!"

"What of them!—speak, woman!"

Here, breathlessly, and with many a break, Benedetta recounted to Rienzi, in whom the reader has already recognised the brother of Irene, so far of the adventure with Martino di Porto, as she had witnessed: of the termination and result of the contest she knew naught.

Rienzi listened in silence ; but the deadly paleness of his countenance, and the writhing of the nether lip, testified the emotions to which he gave no audible vent.

“ You hear, my lord bishop—you hear,” said he, when Benedetta had concluded ; and turning to the bishop, whose departure the narrative had delayed—“ you hear to what outrage the citizens of Rome are subjected. My hat and sword ! instantly ! My lord, forgive my abruptness.”

“ Whither art thou bent, then ? ” asked Raimond.

“ Whither—whither !—Ay, I forgot, my lord, you have no sister. Perhaps, too, you had no brother ?—No, no ; one victim at least I will live to save. Whither, you ask me ?—to the palace of Martino di Porto.”

“ To an Orsini *alone*, and for justice ? ”

“ Alone, and for *justice* !—No ! ” shouted Rienzi, in a loud voice, as he seized his sword, now brought to him by one of his servants, and rushed from the house ; “ but one man is sufficient for *revenge* ! ”

The bishop paused for a moment’s deliberation. “ He must not be lost,” muttered he, “ as he well may be, if exposed thus solitary to the wolf’s rage. What, ho ! ” he cried aloud ; “ advance the torches ! quick, quick ! We ourself—we, the Vicar of the Pope—will see to this. Calm yourselves, good people ; your young signora shall be restored. On ! to the palace of Martino di Porto ! ”

CHAPTER VI.

Irene in the Palace of Adrian di Castello.

As the Cyprian gazed on the image in which he had embodied a youth of dreams, what time the living hues flushed slowly beneath the marble,—so gazed the young and passionate Adrian upon the form reclined before him, reawakening gradually to life. And, if the beauty of that face were not of the loftiest or the most dazzling order, if its soft and quiet character might be outshone by many, of loveliness less really perfect, yet never was there a countenance that, to some eyes, would have seemed more charming, and never one in which more eloquently was wrought that ineffable and virgin expression which Italian art seeks for in its models,—in which modesty is the outward, and tenderness the latent, expression; the bloom of youth, both of form and heart, ere the first frail and delicate freshness of either is brushed away: and when even love itself, the only unquiet visitant that should be known at such an age, is but a sentiment, and not a passion!

“Benedetta,” murmured Irene, at length opening her eyes, unconsciously, upon him who knelt beside

her,—eyes of that uncertain, that most liquid hue, on which you might gaze for years and never learn the secret of the colour, so changed it with the dilating pupil,—darkening in the shade, and brightening into azure in the light—

“Benedetta,” said Irene, “where art thou? Oh, Benedetta! I have had such a dream.”

“And I, too, such a vision!” thought Adrian.

“Where am I?” cried Irene, rising from the couch. “This room—these hangings—Holy Virgin! do I dream still! and you? Heavens!—it is the Lord Adrian di Castello!”

“Is that a name thou hast been taught to fear?” said Adrian; “if so, I will forswear it.”

If Irene now blushed deeply, it was not in that wild delight with which her romantic heart might have foretold that she would listen to the first words of homage from Adrian di Castello. Bewildered and confused,—terrified at the strangeness of the place, and shrinking even from the thought of finding herself alone with one who for years had been present to her fancies,—alarm and distress were the emotions she felt the most, and which most were impressed upon her speaking countenance; and as Adrian now drew nearer to her, despite the gentleness of his voice and the respect of his looks, her fears, not the less strong that they were vague, increased upon her; she retreated to the further end of the room, looked wildly round her, and then, covering her face with her hands, burst into a paroxysm of grief.

Moved himself by these tears, and divining her thoughts, Adrian forgot for a moment all the more daring wishes he had formed.

“Fear not, sweet lady,” said he, earnestly: “recollect thyself, I beseech thee; no peril, no evil, can reach thee here; it was this hand that saved thee from the outrage of the Orsini—this roof is but the shelter of a friend! Tell me, then, fair wonder, thy name and residence, and I will summon my servitors, and guard thee to thy home at once.”

Perhaps the relief of tears, even more than Adrian’s words, restored Irene to herself, and enabled her to comprehend her novel situation; and as her senses, thus cleared, told her what she owed to him whom her dreams had so long imaged as the ideal of all excellence, she recovered her self-possession, and uttered her thanks with a grace not the less winning, if it still partook of embarrassment.

“Thank me not,” answered Adrian, passionately. “I have touched thy hand—I am repaid. Repaid; nay, all gratitude—all homage is for me to render!”

Blushing again, but with far different emotions than before, Irene, after a momentary pause, replied, “Yet, my lord, I must consider it a debt the more weighty that you speak of it so lightly. And now, complete the obligation. I do not see my companion—suffer her to accompany me home; it is but a short way hence.”

“Blessed, then, is the air that I have breathed so unconsciously!” said Adrian. “But thy companion, dear

lady, is not here. She fled, I imagine, in the confusion of the conflict; and not knowing thy name, nor being able, in thy then state, to learn it from thy lips, it was my happy necessity to convey thee hither;—but I will be thy companion. Nay, why that timid glance? my people, also, shall attend us.”

“My thanks, noble lord, are of little worth; my brother, who is not unknown to thee, will thank thee more fittingly. May I depart?” and Irene, as she spoke, was already at the door.

“Art thou so eager to leave me?” answered Adrian, sadly. “Alas! when thou hast departed from my eyes, it will seem as if the moon had left the night!—but it is happiness to obey thy wishes, even though they tear thee from me.”

A slight smile parted Irene’s lips, and Adrian’s heart beat audibly to himself, as he drew from that smile, and those downcast eyes, no unfavourable omen.

Reluctantly and slowly he turned towards the door, and summoned his attendants. “But,” said he, as they stood on the lofty staircase, “thou sayest, sweet lady, that thy brother’s name is not unknown to me. Heaven grant that he be, indeed, a friend of the Colonna!”

“His boast,” answered Irene, evasively; “the boast of Cola di Rienzi is, to be a friend to the friends of Rome.”

“Holy Virgin of Ara Cœli!—is thy brother that extraordinary man?” exclaimed Adrian, as he foresaw,

at the mention of that name, a barrier to his sudden passion. "Alas ! in a Colonna, in a noble, he will see no merit ; even though thy fortunate deliverer, sweet maiden, sought to be his early friend !"

"Thou wrongest him much, my lord," returned Irene, warmly ; "he is a man above all others to sympathise with thy generous valour, even had it been exerted in defence of the humblest woman in Rome,—how much more, then, when in protection of his sister !"

"The times are, indeed, diseased," answered Adrian, thoughtfully, as they now found themselves in the open street, "when men who alike mourn for the woes of their country are yet suspicious of each other ; when to be a patrician is to be regarded as an enemy to the people ; when to be termed the friend of the people is to be considered a foe to the patricians : but come what may, oh ! let me hope, dear lady, that no doubts, no divisions, shall banish from *thy* breast one gentle memory of me !"

"Ah ! little, little do you know me !" began Irene, and stopped suddenly short.

"Speak ! speak again !—of what music has this envious silence deprived my soul ! Thou wilt not, then, forget me ? And," continued Adrian, "we shall meet again ? It is to Rienzi's house we are bound now ; to-morrow I shall visit my old companion,—to-morrow I shall see thee. Will it not be so ?"

In Irene's silence was her answer.

"And as thou hast told me thy brother's name, make it sweet to my ear, and add to it thine own."

“They call me Irene.”

“Irene, Irene!—let me repeat it. It is a soft name, and dwells upon the lips as if loth to leave them—a fitting name for one like thee.”

Thus making his welcome court to Irene, in that flowered and glowing language which, if more peculiar to that age and to the gallantry of the south, is also the language in which the poetry of youthful passion would, in all times and lands, utter its rich extravagance, could heart speak to heart, Adrian conveyed homeward his beautiful charge, taking, however, the most circuitous and lengthened route; an artifice which Irene either perceived not, or silently forgave. They were now within sight of the street in which Rienzi dwelt, when a party of men, bearing torches, came unexpectedly upon them. It was the train of the Bishop of Orvietto, returning from the palace of Martino di Porto, and in their way (accompanied by Rienzi) to that of Adrian. They had learned at the former, without an interview with the Orsini, from the retainers in the court below, the fortune of the conflict, and the name of Irene's champion; and, despite Adrian's general reputation for gallantry, Rienzi knew enough of his character, and the nobleness of his temper, to feel assured that Irene was safe in his protection. Alas! in that very safety to the person is often the most danger to the heart. Woman never so dangerously loves, as when he who loves her, for her sake, subdues himself.

Clasped to her brother's breast, Irene bade him thank her deliverer; and Rienzi, with that fascinating

frankness which sits so well on those usually reserved, and which all who would rule the hearts of their fellow-men must at times command, advanced to the young Colonna, and poured forth his gratitude and praise.

“We have been severed too long—we must know each other again,” replied Adrian. “I shall seek thee, ere long, be assured.”

Turning to take his leave of Irene, he conveyed her hand to his lips, and pressing it, as it dropped from his clasp, was he deceived in thinking that those delicate fingers lightly, involuntarily, returned the pressure?

CHAPTER VII.

Upon Love and Lovers.

IF, in adopting the legendary love-tale of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare had changed the scene in which it is cast for a more northern clime, we may doubt whether the art of Shakespeare himself could have reconciled us at once to the suddenness and the strength of Juliet's passion. And, even as it is, perhaps there are few of our rational and sober-minded islanders who would not honestly confess, if fairly questioned, that they deem the romance and fervour of those ill-starred lovers of Verona exaggerated and overdrawn. Yet, in Italy, the picture of that affection born of a night—but “strong as death”—is one to which the veriest commonplaces of life would afford parallels without number. As in different ages, so in different climes, love varies wonderfully in the shapes it takes. And even at this day, beneath Italian skies, many a simple girl would feel as Juliet, and many a homely gallant would rival the extravagance of Romeo. Long suits in that sunny land, wherein, as whereof, I now write, are unknown. In no other land, perhaps, is there found so commonly the love at first sight, which in France is a jest, and in England a doubt; in no other land, too, is love, though

so suddenly conceived, more faithfully preserved. That which is ripened in fancy comes at once to passion, yet is embalmed through all time by sentiment. And this must be my and their excuse, if the love of Adrian seem too prematurely formed, and that of Irene too romantically conceived;—it is the excuse which they take from the air and sun, from the customs of their ancestors, from the soft contagion of example. But while they yielded to the dictates of their hearts, it was with a certain though secret sadness—a presentiment that had, perhaps, its charm, though it was of cross and evil. Born of so proud a race, Adrian could scarcely dream of marriage with the sister of a plebeian; and Irene, unconscious of the future glory of her brother, could hardly have cherished any hope, save that of being loved. Yet these adverse circumstances, which, in the harder, the more prudent, the more self-denying, perhaps the more virtuous minds, that are formed beneath the northern skies, would have been an inducement to wrestle against love so placed, only contributed to feed and to strengthen *theirs* by an opposition which has ever its attraction for romance. They found frequent, though short, opportunities of meeting—not quite alone, but only in the conniving presence of Benedetta: sometimes in the public gardens, sometimes amidst the vast and deserted ruins by which the house of Rienzi was surrounded. They surrendered themselves, without much question of the future, to the excitement—the elysium—of the hour: they lived but from day to day; *their* future was the

next time they should meet; beyond that epoch, the very mists of their youthful love closed in obscurity and shadow which they sought not to penetrate: and as yet they had not arrived at that period of affection when there was danger of their fall—their love had not passed the golden portal where Heaven ceases and Earth begins. Everything for them was the poetry, the vagueness, the refinement—not the power, the concentration, the mortality—of desire! The look—the whisper—the brief pressure of the hand—at most, the first kisses of love, rare and few—these marked the human limits of that sentiment which filled them with a new life, which elevated them as with a new soul.

The roving tendencies of Adrian were at once fixed and centered; the dreams of his tender mistress had awakened to a life dreaming still, but “rounded with a *truth*.” All that earnestness, and energy, and fervour of emotion, which, in her brother, broke forth in the schemes of patriotism and the aspirations of power, were, in Irene, softened down into one object of existence, one concentration of soul—and that was love. Yet, in this range of thought and action, so apparently limited, there was, in reality, no less boundless a sphere than in the wide space of her brother’s many-pathed ambition. Not the less had she the power and scope for all the loftiest capacities granted to our clay. Equal was her enthusiasm for her idol; equal, had she been equally tried, would have been her generosity, her devotion:—greater, be sure, her courage; more inalienable her worship; more unsullied by selfish pur-

poses and sordid views. Time, change, misfortune, ingratitude, would have left *her* the same ! What state could fall, what liberty decay, if the zeal of man's noisy patriotism were as pure as the silent loyalty of a woman's love?

In them everything *was young* ! — the heart unchilled, unblighted—that fulness and luxuriance of life's life which has in it something of divine. At that age, when it seems as if we could never die, how deathless, how flushed and mighty as with the youngness of a god, is all that our hearts create ! Our own youth is like that of the earth itself, when it peopled the woods and waters with divinities ; when life ran riot, and yet only give birth to beauty ;—all its shapes, of poetry—all its airs, the melodies of Arcady and Olympus ! The Golden age never leaves the world : it exists still, and shall exist, till love, health, poetry, are no more ; but only for the young !

If I now dwell, though but for a moment, on this interlude in a drama calling forth more masculine passions than that of love, it is because I foresee that the occasion will but rarely recur. If I linger on the description of Irene and her hidden affection, rather than wait for circumstances to portray them better than the author's words can, it is because I foresee that that loving and lovely image must continue to the last rather a shadow than a portrait—thrown in the background, as is the real destiny of such natures, by bolder figures and more gorgeous colours ; a something whose presence is rather felt than seen, and whose very harmony with the whole consists in its retiring and subdued repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Enthusiastic Man Judged by the Discreet Man.

“THOU wrongest me,” said Rienzi, warmly, to Adrian, as they sat alone, towards the close of a long conference ; “ I do not play the part of a mere demagogue ; I wish not to stir the great deeps in order that my lees of fortune may rise to the surface. So long have I brooded over the past, that it seems to me as if I had become a part of it—as if I had no separate existence. I have coined my whole soul into one master passion,—and its end is the restoration of Rome.”

“ But by what means ? ”

“ My lord ! my lord ! there is but one way to restore the greatness of a people—it is an appeal to the people themselves. It is not in the power of princes and barons to make a state permanently glorious ; they raise themselves, but they raise not the people with them. All great regenerations are the universal movement of the mass.”

“ Nay,” answered Adrian, “ then have we read history differently. To me, all great regenerations seem to have been the work of the few, and tacitly accepted by the multitude. But let us not dispute after the manner of the schools. Thou sayest loudly that a vast

crisis is at hand ; that the Good Estate (*buono stato*) shall be established. How ? where are your arms ?—your soldiers ? are the nobles less strong than heretofore ? is the mob more bold, more constant ? Heaven knows that I speak not with the prejudices of my order—I weep for the debasement of my country ! I am a Roman, and in that name I forget that I am a noble. But I tremble at the storm you would raise so hazardously. If your insurrection succeed, it will be violent : it will be purchased by blood—by the blood of all the loftiest names of Rome. You will aim at a second expulsion of the Tarquins ; but it will be more like a second proscription of Sylla. Massacres and disorders never pave the way to peace. If, on the other hand, you fail, the chains of Rome are riveted for ever : an ineffectual struggle to escape is but an excuse for additional tortures to the slave.”

“ And what, then, would the Lord Adrian have us do ? ” said Rienzi, with that peculiar and sarcastic smile which has before been noted. “ Shall we wait till the Colonna and Orsini quarrel no more ? shall we ask the Colonna for liberty, and the Orsini for justice ? My lord, we cannot appeal to the nobles against the nobles. We must not ask them to moderate their power ; we must restore to ourselves that power. There may be danger in the attempt—but we attempt it amongst the monuments of the Forum : and if we fall—we shall perish worthy of our sires ! Ye have high descent, and sounding titles, and wide lands, and you talk of *your* ancestral honours ! We, too,—we

plebeians of Rome,—we have *ours*! Our fathers were freemen! where is our heritage? not sold—not given away: but stolen from us, now by fraud, now by force—filched from us in our sleep; or wrung from us with fierce hands, amidst our cries and struggles. My lord, we but ask that lawful heritage to be restored to us: to us—nay, to you it is the same; your liberty, alike, is gone. Can you dwell in your father's house, without towers, and fortresses, and the bought swords of bravos? can you walk in the streets at dark without arms and followers? True, *you*, a noble, may retaliate; though *we* dare not. You, in your turn, may terrify and outrage others; but does license compensate for liberty? They have given you pomp and power—but the safety of equal laws were a better gift. Oh, were I you—were I Stephen Colonna himself, I should pant, ay, thirstily as I do now, for that free air which comes not through bars and bulwarks against my fellow-citizens, but in the open space of Heaven—safe, because protected by the silent Providence of Law, and not by the lean fears and hollow-eyed suspicions which are the comrades of a hated power. The tyrant thinks he is free, because he commands slaves; the meanest peasant in a free state is more free than he is. Oh, my lord, that you—the brave, the generous, the enlightened—you, almost alone amidst your order, in the knowledge that we *had* a country—oh, would that you who can sympathise with our sufferings, would strike with us for their redress!”

“Thou wilt war against Stephen Colonna, my kins-

man ; and though I have seen him but little, nor, truth to say, esteem him much, yet he is the boast of our house,—how can I join thee ?”

“His life will be safe, his possessions safe, his rank safe. What do we war against ? His power to do wrong to others.”

“Should he discover that thou hast force beyond words, he would be less merciful to *thee*.”

“And has he not discovered that ? Do not the shouts of the people tell him that I am a man whom he should fear ? Does he—the cautious, the wily, the profound—does he build fortresses, and erect towers, and not see from his battlements the mighty fabric that I, too, have erected ?”

“You ! where, Rienzi ?”

“In the hearts of Rome ! Does he not see ?” continued Rienzi. “No, no ; he—all, all his tribe are blind. Is it not so ?”

“Of a certainty, my kinsman has no belief in your power, else he would have crushed you long ere this. Nay, it was but three days ago that he said, gravely, he would rather *you* addressed the populace than the best priest in Christendom ; for that other orators inflamed the crowd, and no man so stilled and dispersed them as you did.”

“And I called *him* profound ! Does not heaven hush the air most when most it prepares the storm ? Ay, my lord, I understand. Stephen Colonna despises me. I have been” [here, as he continued, a deep blush mantled over his cheek]—“you remember it—at his

palace in my younger days, and pleased him with witty tales and light apophthegms. Nay—ha! ha!—he would call me, I think, sometimes, in gay compliment, his jester—his buffoon! I have brooked his insult; I have even bowed to his applause. I would undergo the same penance, stoop to the same shame, for the same motive, and in the same cause. What did I desire to effect? Can you tell me? No! I will whisper it, then, to you: it was—the contempt of Stephen Colonna. Under that contempt I was protected, till protection became no longer necessary. I desired not to be thought formidable by the patricians, in order that, quietly and unsuspected, I might make my way amongst the people. I have done so; I now throw aside the mask. Face to face with Stephen Colonna, I could tell him, this very hour, that I brave his anger; that I laugh at his dungeons and armed men. But if he think me the same Rienzi as of old, let him; I can wait my hour.”

“Yet,” said Adrian, waiving an answer to the haughty language of his companion, “tell me, what dost thou ask for the people, in order to avoid an appeal to their passions?—ignorant and capricious as they are, thou canst not appeal to their reason.”

“I ask full justice and safety for all men. I will be contented with no less a compromise. I ask the nobles to dismantle their fortresses; to disband their armed retainers; to acknowledge no impunity for crime in high lineage; to claim no protection save in the courts of the common law.”

“Vain desire!” said Adrian. “Ask what may yet be granted.”

“Ha—ha!” replied Rienzi, laughing bitterly, “did I not tell you it was a vain dream to ask for law and justice at the hands of the great? Can you blame me, then, that I ask it elsewhere?” Then, suddenly changing his tone and manner, he added with great solemnity—“Waking life hath false and vain dreams: but sleep is sometimes a mighty prophet. By sleep it is that heaven mysteriously communes with its creatures, and guides and sustains its earthly agents in the path to which its providence leads them on.”

Adrian made no reply. This was not the first time he had noted that Rienzi’s strong intellect was strangely conjoined with a deep and mystical superstition. And this yet more inclined the young noble, who, though sufficiently devout, yielded but little to the wilder credulities of the time, to doubt the success of the schemer’s projects. In this he erred greatly, though his error was that of the worldly wise; for nothing ever so inspires human daring as the fond belief that it is the agent of a Diviner Wisdom. Revenge and patriotism united in one man of genius and ambition—such are the Archimedian levers that find in FANATICISM, the spot *out* of the world by which to move the world. The prudent man may direct a state; but it is the enthusiast who regenerates it,—or ruins.

CHAPTER IX.

When the People saw this Picture every one marvelled.

BEFORE the market-place, and at the foot of the Capitol, an immense crowd was assembled. Each man sought to push before his neighbour; each struggled to gain access to one particular spot, round which the crowd was wedged thick and dense.

“Corpo di Dio!” said a man of huge stature, pressing onward, like some bulky ship, casting the noisy waves right and left from its prow, “this is hot work; but for what, in the holy Mother’s name, do ye crowd so? See you not, Sir Ribald, that my right arm is disabled, swathed, and bandaged, so that I cannot help myself better than a baby? and yet you push against me as if I were an old wall!”

“Ah, Cecco del Vecchio!—what, man! we must make way for you—you are too small and tender to bustle through a crowd! Come, I will protect you!” said a dwarf of some four feet high, glancing up at the giant.

“Faith,” said the grim smith, looking round on the mob, who laughed loud at the dwarf’s proffer, “we all do want protection, big and small. What do you

laugh for, ye apes?—ay, you don't understand parables."

"And yet it is a parable we are come to gaze upon," said one of the mob, with a slight sneer.

"Pleasant day to you, Signor Baroncelli," answered Cecco del Vecchio; "you are a good man, and love the people; it makes one's heart smile to see you. What's all this pother for?"

"Why, the pope's notary hath set up a great picture in the market-place, and the gapers say it relates to Rome; so they are melting their brains out, this hot day, to guess at the riddle."

"Ho! ho!" said the smith, pushing on so vigorously that he left the speaker suddenly in the rear; "if Cola di Rienzi hath aught in the matter, I would break through stone rocks to get to it."

"Much good will a dead daub do us," said Baroncelli, sourly, and turning to his neighbours; but no man listened to him, and he, a would-be demagogue, gnawed his lip in envy.

Amidst half-awed groans and curses from the men whom he jostled aside, and open objurgations and shrill cries from the women, to whose robes and head-gear he showed as little respect, the sturdy smith won his way to a space fenced round by chains, in the centre of which was placed a huge picture.

"How came it hither?" cried one; "I was first at the market."

"We found it here at daybreak," said a vendor of fruit: "no one was by."

“But why do you fancy Rienzi had a hand in it?”

“Why, who else could?” answered twenty voices.

“True! Who else?” echoed the gaunt smith. “I dare be sworn the good man spent the whole night in painting it himself. Blood of St Peter! but it is mighty fine! What is it about?”

“That’s the riddle,” said a meditative fish-woman: “if I could make it out, I should die happy.”

“It is something about liberty and taxes, no doubt,” said Luigi, the butcher, leaning over the chains. “Ah, if Rienzi were minded, every poor man would have his bit of meat in his pot.”

“And as much bread as he could eat,” added a pale baker.

“Chut! bread and meat—everybody has that now!—but what wine the poor folks drink! One has no encouragement to take pains with one’s vineyard,” said a vine-dresser.

“Ho, hollo!—long life to Pandulfo di Guido! make way for master Pandulfo; he is a learned man; he is a friend of the great notary’s; he will tell us all about the picture; make way, there—make way!”

Slowly and modestly, Pandulfo di Guido, a quiet, wealthy, and honest man of letters, whom naught save the violence of the times could have roused from his tranquil home, or his studious closet, passed to the chains. He looked long and hard at the picture, which was bright with new and yet moist colours, and exhibited somewhat of the reviving art, which, though

hard and harsh in its features, was about that time visible, and, carried to a far higher degree, we yet gaze upon in the paintings of Perugino, who flourished during the succeeding generation. The people pressed round the learned man with open mouths : now turning their eyes to the picture, now to Pandulfo.

“Know you not,” at length said Pandulfo, “the easy and palpable meaning of this design? Behold how the painter has presented to you a vast and stormy sea—mark how its waves——”

“Speak louder—louder!” shouted the impatient crowd.

“Hush!” cried those in the immediate vicinity of Pandulfo, “the worthy signor is perfectly audible!”

Meanwhile, some of the more witty, pushing towards a stall in the market-place, bore from it a rough table, from which they besought Pandulfo to address the people. The pale citizen, with some pain and shame, for he was no practised spokesman, was obliged to assent; but when he cast his eyes over the vast and breathless crowd, his own deep sympathy with their cause inspired and emboldened him. A light broke from his eyes; his voice swelled into power; and his head, usually buried in his breast, became erect and commanding in its air.

“You see before you in the picture,” he began again, “a mighty and tempestuous sea : upon its waves you behold five ships : four of them are already wrecks—their masts are broken, the waves are dashing through the rent planks, they are past all aid and hope ; on

each of these ships lies the corpse of a woman. See you not, in the wan face and livid limbs, how faithfully the limner hath painted the hues and loathsomeness of death? Below each of these ships is a word that applies the metaphor to truth. Yonder, you see the name of Carthage; the other three are Troy, Jerusalem, and Babylon. To these four is one common inscription. 'To exhaustion were we brought by injustice!' Turn now your eyes to the middle of the sea—there you behold the fifth ship, tossed amidst the waves, her mast broken, her rudder gone, her sails shivered, but not yet a wreck like the rest, though she soon may be. On her deck kneels a female, clothed in mourning; mark the woe upon her countenance—how cunningly the artist has conveyed its depth and desolation; she stretches out her arms in prayer, she implores your and Heaven's assistance. Mark now the superscription—'This is Rome!'—Yes, it is your country that addresses you in this emblem?"

The crowd waved to and fro, and a deep murmur crept gathering over the silence which they had hitherto kept.

"Now," continued Pandulfo, "turn your gaze to the right of the picture, and you will behold the cause of the tempest—you will see why the fifth vessel is thus perilled, and her sisters are thus wrecked. Mark, four different kinds of animals, who, from their horrid jaws, send forth the winds and storms which torture and rack the sea. The first are the lions, the wolves, the bears. These, the inscription tells you, are the lawless and savage signors of the state. The next are the

dogs and swine—these are the evil counsellors and parasites. Thirdly, you behold the dragons and the foxes—and these are false judges and notaries, and they who sell justice. Fourthly, in the hares, the goats, the apes, that assist in creating the storm, you perceive, by the inscription, the emblems of the popular thieves and homicides, ravishers and spoliators. Are ye bewildered still, O Romans ! or have ye mastered the riddle of the picture ?”

Far in their massive palaces the Savelli and Orsini heard the echo of the shouts that answered the question of Pandulfo.

“Are ye, then, without hope ?” resumed the scholar, as the shout ceased, and hushing, with the first sound of his voice, the ejaculations and speeches which each man had turned to utter to his neighbour. “Are ye without hope ? Doth the picture, which shows your tribulation, promise you no redemption ? Behold, above that angry sea, the heavens open, and the majesty of God descends gloriously, as to judgment ; and from the rays that surround the Spirit of God extend two flaming swords, and on those swords stand, in wrath, but in deliverance, the two patron saints—the two mighty guardians of your city ! People of Rome, farewell ! the parable is finished.”*

* M. Sismondi attributes to Rienzi a fine oration at the showing of the picture, in which he thundered against the vices of the patricians. The contemporary biographer of Rienzi says nothing of this harangue. But, apparently (since history has its liberties as well as fiction), M. Sismondi has thought it convenient to confound two occasions very distinct in themselves.

CHAPTER X.

A Rough Spirit raised, which may hereafter rend the Wizard.

WHILE thus animated was the scene around the Capitol, *within* one of the apartments of the palace sat the agent and prime cause of that excitement. In the company of his quiet scribes, Rienzi appeared absorbed in the patient details of his avocation. While the murmur and the hum, the shout and the tramp, of multitudes, rolled to his chamber, he seemed not to heed them, nor to rouse himself a moment from his task. With the unbroken regularity of an automaton, he continued to enter in his large book, and with the clear and beautiful characters of the period, those damning figures which taught him, better than declamations, the frauds practised on the people, and armed him with that weapon of plain fact which it is so difficult for abuse to parry.

“Page 2, Vol. B.,” said he, in the tranquil voice of business, to the clerks; “see there, the profits of the salt duty; department No. 3—very well. Page 9, Vol. D.—what is the account rendered by Vescobaldi, the collector? What! twelve thousand florins?—no more?—unconscionable rascal!” (Here was a loud shout without of ‘Pandulfo!—long live Pandulfo!’)

“Pastrucci, my friend, your head wanders? you are listening to the noise without—please to amuse yourself with the calculation I intrusted to you. Santi, what is the entry given in by Antonio Tralli?”

A slight tap was heard at the door, and Pandulfo entered.

The clerks continued their labour, though they looked up hastily at the pale and respectable visitor, whose name, to their great astonishment, had thus become a popular cry.

“Ah, my friend,” said Rienzi, calmly enough in voice, but his hands trembled with ill-suppressed emotion, “you would speak to me alone, eh? well, well—this way.” Thus saying, he led the citizen into a small cabinet in the rear of the room of office, carefully shut the door, and then giving himself up to the natural impatience of his character, seized Pandulfo by the hand: “Speak!” cried he: “do they take the interpretation?—have you made it plain and palpable enough?—has it sunk deep into their souls?”

“Oh, by St Peter! yes!” returned the citizen, whose spirits were elevated by his recent discovery that he, too, was an orator—a luxurious pleasure for a timid man. “They swallowed every word of the interpretation; they are moved to the marrow—you might lead them this very hour to battle, and find them heroes. As for the sturdy smith——”

“What! Cecco del Vecchio?” interrupted Rienzi; “ah, his heart is wrought in bronze—what did he?”

“Why, he caught me by the hem of my robe as I

descended my rostrum (oh! would you could have seen me!—*per fede* I had caught your mantle!—I was a second *you*!) and said, weeping like a child, ‘Ah, signor, I am but a poor man, and of little worth; but if every drop of blood in this body were a life, I would give it for my country!’”

“Brave soul!” said Rienzi, with emotion; “would Rome had but fifty such! No man hath done us more good among his own class than Cecco del Vecchio.”

“They feel a protection in his very size,” said Pandulfo. “It is something to hear such big words from such a big fellow.”

“Were there *any* voices lifted in disapprobation of the picture and its sentiment?”

“None.”

“The time is nearly ripe, then—a few suns more, and the fruit must be gathered. The Aventine,—the Lateran,—and then *the solitary trumpet*!” Thus saying, Rienzi, with folded arms and downcast eyes, seemed sunk into a reverie.

“By the way,” said Pandulfo, “I had almost forgot to tell thee, that the crowd would have poured themselves hither, so impatient were they to see thee; but I bade Cecco del Vecchio mount the rostrum, and tell them, in his blunt way, that it would be unseemly at the present time, when thou wert engaged in the Capitol on civil and holy affairs, to rush in so great a body into thy presence. Did I not right?”

“Most right, my Pandulfo.”

“But Cecco del Vecchio says he must come and

kiss thy hand, and thou mayst expect him here the moment he can escape unobserved from the crowd."

"He is welcome!" said Rienzi, half mechanically, for he was still absorbed in thought.

"And, lo! here he is,"—as one of the scribes announced the visit of the smith.

"Let him be admitted," said Rienzi, seating himself composedly.

When the huge smith found himself in the presence of Rienzi, it amused Pandulfo to perceive the wonderful influences of mind over matter. That fierce and sturdy giant, who, in all popular commotions, towered above his tribe, with thews of stone, and nerves of iron, the rallying-point and bulwark of the rest—stood now colouring and trembling before the intellect, which (so had the eloquent spirit of Rienzi waked and fanned the spark which, till then, had lain dormant in that rough bosom) might almost be said to have created his own. And he, indeed, who first arouses in the bondsman the sense and soul of freedom, comes as near as is permitted to man, nearer than the philosopher, nearer even than the poet, to the great creative attribute of God!—But, if the breast be uneducated, the gift may curse the giver; and he who passes at once from the slave to the freeman may pass as rapidly from the freeman to the ruffian.

"Approach, my friend," said Rienzi, after a moment's pause; "I know all that thou hast done, and wouldst do, for Rome! Thou art worthy of her best days, and thou art born to share in their return."

The smith dropped at the feet of Rienzi, who held out his hand to raise him, which Cecco del Vecchio seized, and reverentially kissed.

“This kiss does not betray,” said Rienzi, smiling ; “but rise, my friend—this posture is only due to God and his saints !”

“He is a saint who helps us at need !” said the smith, bluntly, “and that no man has done as thou hast. But when,” he added, sinking his voice, and fixing his eyes hard on Rienzi, as one may do who waits a signal to strike a blow, “when—when shall we make the great effort ?”

“Thou hast spoken to all the brave men in thy neighbourhood—are they well prepared ?”

“To live or die, as Rienzi bids them !”

“I must have the list—the number—names—houses and callings, this night.”

“Thou shalt.”

“Each man must sign his name or mark with his own hand.”

“It shall be done.”

“Then, harkye ! attend Pandulfo di Guido at his house this evening, at sunset. He shall instruct thee where to meet this night some brave hearts ; thou art worthy to be ranked amongst them. Thou wilt not fail !”

“By the holy Stairs ! I will count every minute till then,” said the smith, his swarthy face lighted with pride at the confidence shown him.

“Meanwhile, watch all your neighbours ; let no man

flag or grow faint-hearted—none of thy friends must be branded as a traitor !”

“ I will cut his throat, were he my own mother’s son, if I find one pledged man flinch !” said the fierce smith.

“ Ha, ha !” rejoined Rienzi, with that strange laugh which belonged to him : “ a miracle ! a miracle ! The Picture speaks now !”

It was already nearly dusk when Rienzi left the Capitol. The broad space before its walls was empty and deserted, and wrapping his mantle closely round him, he walked musingly on.

“ I have almost climbed the height,” thought he, “ and now the precipice yawns before me. If I fail, what a fall ! The last hope of my country falls with me. Never will a noble rise against the nobles. Never will another plebeian have the opportunities and the power that I have ! Rome is bound up with me—with a single life. The liberties of all time are fixed to a reed that a wind may uproot. But oh, Providence ! hast thou not reserved and marked me for great deeds ? How, step by step, have I been led on to this solemn enterprise ! How has each hour prepared its successor ! And yet what danger ! *if* the inconstant people, made cowardly by long thralldom, do but waver in the crisis, I am swept away !”

As he spoke, he raised his eyes, and lo ! before him, the first star of twilight shone calmly down upon the crumbling remnants of the Tarpeian Rock. It was no

favouring omen, and Rienzi's heart beat quicker as that dark and ruined mass frowned thus suddenly on his gaze.

"Dread monument," thought he, "of what dark catastrophes, to what unknown schemes, hast thou been the witness ! To how many enterprises, on which history is dumb, hast thou set the seal ! How know we whether they were criminal or just ? How know we whether he, thus doomed as a traitor, would not, if successful, have been immortalised as a deliverer ? If I fall, who will write my chronicle ? One of the people ? alas ! blinded and ignorant, they furnish forth no minds that can appeal to posterity. One of the patricians ? in what colours then shall I be painted ? No tomb will rise for me amidst the wrecks ; no hand scatter flowers upon my grave !"

Thus meditating on the verge of that mighty enterprise to which he had devoted himself, Rienzi pursued his way. He gained the Tiber, and paused for a few moments beside its legendary stream, over which the purple and starlit heaven shone deeply down. He crossed the bridge which leads to the quarter of the Trastevere, whose haughty inhabitants yet boast themselves the sole true descendants of the ancient Romans. Here his step grew quicker and more light ; brighter, if less solemn, thoughts crowded upon his breast ; and ambition, lulled for a moment, left his strained and over-laboured mind to the reign of a softer passion.

CHAPTER XI.

Nina di Raselli.

“ I TELL you, Lucia, I do not love those stuffs ; they do not become me ! Saw you ever so poor a dye ?—this purple, indeed ! that crimson ! Why did you let the man leave them ? Let him take them elsewhere to-morrow. They may suit the signoras on the other side the Tiber, who imagine everything Venetian must be perfect ; but I, Lucia, *I* see with my own eyes, and judge from my own mind.”

“ Ah, dear lady,” said the serving-maid, “ if you were, as you doubtless will be, some time or other, a grand signora, how worthily you would wear the honours ! Santa Cecilia ! no other dame in Rome would be looked at while the Lady Nina were by !”

“ Would we not teach them what pomp was !” answered Nina. “ Oh ! what festivals would we hold ! Saw you not from the gallery the revels given last week by the Lady Giulia Savelli ?”

“ Ay, signora : and when you walked up the hall in your silver and pearl tissue, there ran such a murmur through the gallery ; every one cried, ‘ The Savelli have entertained an angel ! ’”

“Pish ! Lucia ; no flattery, girl.”

“It is naked truth, lady. But that *was* a revel, was it not ? There was grandeur !—fifty servitors in scarlet and gold ! and the music playing all the while. The minstrels were sent for from Bergamo. Did not that festival please you ? Ah, I warrant many were the fine speeches made to you that day !”

“Heigho !—no, there was one voice wanting, and all the music was marred. But girl, were *I* the Lady Giulia, I would not have been contented with so poor a revel.”

“How, poor ! Why all the nobles say it outdid the proudest marriage-feast of the Colonna. Nay, a Neapolitan who sat next me, and who had served under the young Queen Joanna, at her marriage, says, that even Naples was outshone.”

“That may be. I know naught of Naples : but I know what *my* court should have been, were I what—what I am not, and may never be ! The banquet vessels should have been of gold ; the cups jewelled to the brim ; not an inch of the rude pavement should have been visible ; all should have glowed with cloth of gold. The fountain in the court should have showered up the perfumes of the East ; my pages should not have been rough youths, blushing at their own uncouthness, but fair boys, who had not told their twelfth year, culled from the daintiest palaces of Rome ; and, as for the music, oh, Lucia !—each musician should have worn a chaplet, and deserved it ; and he who played best should have had a reward, to inspire all the rest—a

rose from me. Saw you, too, the Lady Giulia's robe ! What colours ! they might have put out the sun at noonday !—yellow, and blue, and orange, and scarlet ! Oh, sweet saints !—but my eyes ached all the next day !”

“Doubtless, the Lady Giulia lacks your skill in the mixture of colours,” said the complaisant waiting-woman.

“And then, too, what a mien !—no royalty in it ! She moved along the hall, so that her train well-nigh tripped her every moment ; and then she said, with a foolish laugh, ‘These holiday robes are but troublesome luxuries.’ Troth, for the great there should be no holiday robes ; ’tis for myself, not for others, that I would attire ! Every day should have its new robe, more gorgeous than the last ;—every day should be a holiday !”

“Methought,” said Lucia, “that the Lord Giovanni Orsini seemed very devoted to my lady.”

“He ! the bear !”

“Bear, he may be ! but he has a costly skin. His riches are untold.”

“And the fool knows not how to spend them.”

“Was not that the young Lord Adrian who spoke to you just by the columns, where the music played ?”

“It might be—I forget.”

“Yet, I hear that few ladies forget when Lord Adrian di Castello woos them.”

“There was but one man whose company seemed to me worth the recollection,” answered Nina, unheeding the insinuation of the artful handmaid.

“And who was he?” asked Lucia.

“The old scholar from Avignon!”

“What! he with the grey beard? Oh, signora!”

“Yes,” said Nina, with a grave and sad voice; “when he spoke, the whole scene vanished from my eyes—for he spoke to me of HIM!”

As she said this, the signora sighed deeply, and the tears gathered to her eyes.

The waiting-woman raised her lips in disdain, and her looks in wonder; but she did not dare to venture a reply.

“Open the lattice,” said Nina, after a pause, “and give me yon paper. Not that, girl—but the verses sent me yesterday. What! art thou Italian, and dost thou not know, by instinct, that I spoke of the rhyme of Petrarch?”

Seated by the open casement, through which the moonlight stole soft and sheen, with one lamp beside her, from which she seemed to shade her eyes, though in reality she sought to hide her countenance from Lucia, the young signora appeared absorbed in one of those tender sonnets which then turned the brains and inflamed the hearts of Italy.*

Born of an impoverished house, which, though

* Although it is true that the love sonnets of Petrarch were not then, as now, the most esteemed of his works, yet it has been a great, though a common error, to represent them as little known and coldly admired. Their effect was, in reality, prodigious and universal. Every ballad-singer sung them in the streets, and (says Filippo Villani) “*Gravissimi nesciebant abstinere*”—“Even the gravest could not abstain from them.”

boasting its descent from a consular race of Rome, scarcely at that day maintained a rank amongst the inferior order of nobility, Nina di Raselli was the spoiled child—the idol and the tyrant—of her parents. The energetic and self-willed character of her mind made her rule where she should have obeyed ; and as in all ages dispositions can conquer custom, she had, though in a clime and land where the young and unmarried of her sex are usually chained and fettered, assumed, and by assuming won, the prerogative of independence. She possessed, it is true, more learning and more genius than generally fell to the share of women in that day ; and enough of both to be deemed a miracle by her parents ;—she had also, what they valued more, a surpassing beauty ; and, what they feared more, an indomitable haughtiness ;—a haughtiness mixed with a thousand soft and endearing qualities where she loved ; and which, indeed, where she loved, seemed to vanish. At once vain yet high-minded, resolute yet impassioned, there was a gorgeous magnificence in her very vanity and splendour—an ideality in her waywardness ; her defects made a part of her brilliancy ; without them she would have seemed less woman ; and, knowing her, you would have compared all women by her standard. Softer qualities beside her seemed not more charming, but more insipid. She had no vulgar ambition, for she had obstinately refused many alliances which the daughter of Raselli could scarcely have hoped to form. The untutored minds and savage power of the Roman nobles seemed to her imagination, which was full of

the *poetry* of rank, its luxury and its graces, as something barbarous and revolting, at once to be dreaded and despised. She had, therefore, passed her twentieth year unmarried, but not without love. The faults, themselves, of her character, elevated that ideal of love which she had formed. She required some being round whom all her vainer qualities could rally; she felt that where she loved she must adore; she demanded no common idol before which to humble so strong and imperious a mind. Unlike women of a gentler mould, who desire, for a short period, to exercise the caprices of sweet empire—when she loved she must cease to command; and pride, at once, be humbled to devotion. So rare were the qualities that could attract her, so imperiously did her haughtiness require that those qualities should be above her own, yet of the same order, that her love elevated its object like a god. Accustomed to despise, she felt all the luxury it is to venerate! And if it were her lot to be united with one thus loved, her nature was that which might become elevated by the nature that it gazed on. For her beauty—Reader, shouldst thou ever go to Rome, thou wilt see in the Capitol the picture of the Cumæan Sibyl, which, often copied, no copy can even faintly represent. I beseech thee, mistake not this sibyl for another, for the Roman galleries abound in sibyls.*

* The sibyl referred to is the well-known one by Domenichino. As a mere work of art, that by Guercino, called the Persian sibyl, in the same collection, is perhaps superior; but, in beauty, in character, there is no comparison.

The sibyl I speak of is dark, and the face has an Eastern cast; the robe and turban, gorgeous though they be, grow dim before the rich but transparent roses of the cheek; the hair would be black, save for that golden glow which mellows it to a hue and lustre never seen but in the south, and even in the south most rare; the features, not Grecian, are yet faultless; the mouth, the brow, the ripe and exquisite contour, all are human and voluptuous; the expression, the aspect, is something more; the form is, perhaps, too full for the perfection of loveliness, for the proportions of sculpture, for the delicacy of Athenian models; but the luxuriant fault has a majesty. Gaze long upon that picture: it charms, yet commands, the eye. While you gaze, you call back five centuries. You see before you the breathing image of Nina di Raselli!

But it was not those ingenious and elaborate conceits in which Petrarch, great poet though he be, has so often mistaken pedantry for passion, that absorbed at that moment the attention of the beautiful Nina. Her eyes rested not on the page, but on the garden that stretched below the casement. Over the old fruit-trees and hanging vines fell the moonshine; and in the centre of the green but half-neglected sward, the waters of a small and circular fountain, whose perfect proportions spoke of days long past, played and sparkled in the starlight. The scene was still and beautiful; but neither of its stillness nor its beauty thought Nina: towards one, the gloomiest and most rugged, spot in the whole garden, turned her gaze; there, the trees

stood densely massed together, and shut from view the low but heavy wall which encircled the mansion of Raselli. The boughs on those trees stirred gently, but Nina saw them wave; and now from the copse emerged, slowly and cautiously, a solitary figure, whose shadow threw itself, long and dark, over the sward. It approached the window, and a low voice breathed Nina's name.

“Quick, Lucia!” cried she, breathlessly, turning to her handmaid: “quick! the rope-ladder! it is he! he is come! How slow you are! haste, girl—he may be discovered! There—O joy!—O joy!—My lover! my hero! my Rienzi!”

“It is you!” said Rienzi, as, now entering the chamber, he wound his arms around her half-averted form, “and what is night to others is day to me!”

The first sweet moments of welcome were over; and Rienzi was seated at the feet of his mistress: his head rested on her knees—his face looking up to hers—their hands clasped each in each.

“And for me thou bravest these dangers!” said the lover; “the shame of discovery, the wrath of thy parents!”

“But what are my perils to thine? Oh, Heaven! if my father found thee here thou wouldst die!”

“He would think it then so great a humiliation, that thou, beautiful Nina, who mightst match with the haughtiest names of Rome, shouldst waste thy love on a plebeian—even though the grandson of an emperor!”

The proud heart of Nina could sympathise well with

the wounded pride of her lover : she detected the soreness which lurked beneath his answer, carelessly as it was uttered.

“Hast thou not told me,” she said, “of that great Marius, who was no noble, but from whom the loftiest Colonna would rejoice to claim his descent? and do I not know in thee one who shall yet eclipse the power of Marius, unsullied by his vices?”

“Delicious flattery! sweet prophet!” said Rienzi, with a melancholy smile; “never were thy supporting promises of the future more welcome to me than now; for to thee I will say what I would utter to none else—my soul half sinks beneath the mighty burthen I have heaped upon it. I want new courage as the dread hour approaches; and from thy words and looks I drink it.”

“Oh!” answered Nina, blushing as she spoke, “glorious is indeed the lot which I have bought by my love for thee: glorious to share thy schemes, to cheer thee in doubt, to whisper hope to thee in danger.”

“And give grace to me in triumph!” added Rienzi, passionately. “Ah! should the future ever place upon these brows the laurel-wreath due to one who has saved his country, what joy, what recompense, to lay it at thy feet! Perhaps, in those long and solitary hours of languor and exhaustion which fill up the interstices of time—the dull space for sober thought between the epochs of exciting action—perhaps I should have failed and flagged, and renounced even my dreams for Rome, had they not been linked also with my dreams for

thee!—had I not pictured to myself the hour when my fate should elevate me beyond my birth; when thy sire would deem it no disgrace to give thee to my arms; when thou, too, shouldst stand amidst the dames of Rome, more honoured, as more beautiful, than all; and when I should see that pomp, which my own soul disdains,* made dear and grateful to me because associated with thee! Yes, it is these thoughts that have inspired me, when sterner ones have shrunk back appalled from the spectres that surround their goal. And oh! my Nina, sacred, strong, enduring must be, indeed, the love which lives in the same pure and elevated air as that which sustains my hopes of liberty and fame!”

This was the language which, more even than the vows of fidelity and the dear adulation which springs from the heart's exuberance, had bound the proud and vain soul of Nina to the chains that it so willingly wore. Perhaps, indeed, in the absence of Rienzi, her weaker nature pictured to herself the triumph of humbling the high-born signoras, and eclipsing the barbarous magnificence of the chiefs of Rome; but in his presence, and listening to his more elevated and generous ambition, as yet all unsullied by one private feeling save the hope of her, her higher sympathies were enlisted with his schemes, her mind aspired to raise itself to the height of his, and she thought less of her own

* “*Quem semper abhorruí sicut cenum,*” is the expression used by Rienzi, in his letter to his friend at Avignon, and which was probably sincere. Men rarely act according to the bias of their own tastes.

rise than of his glory. It was sweet to her pride to be the sole confidant of his most secret thoughts, as of his most hardy undertakings; to see bared before her that intricate and plotting spirit; to be admitted even to the knowledge of its doubts and weakness, as of its heroism and power.

Nothing could be more contrasted than the loves of Rienzi and Nina, and those of Adrian and Irene; in the latter, all were the dreams, the phantasies, the extravagance, of youth; they never talked of the future; they mingled no other aspirations with those of love. Ambition, glory, the world's high objects, were nothing to them when together; their love had swallowed up the world, and left nothing visible beneath the sun, save itself. But the passion of Nina and *her* lover was that of more complicated natures and more mature years: it was made up of a thousand feelings, each naturally severed from each, but compelled into one focus by the mighty concentration of love; their talk was of the world; it was from the world that they drew the aliment which sustained it; it was of the future they spoke and thought; of its dreams and imagined glories they made themselves a home and altar; their love had in it more of the Intellectual than that of Adrian and Irene; it was more fitted for this hard earth; it had in it, also, more of the leaven of the later and iron days, and less of poetry and the first golden age.

“And must thou leave me now?” said Nina, her cheek no more averted from his lips, nor her form from

his parting embrace. "The moon is high yet; it is but a little hour thou hast given me."

"An hour! Alas!" said Rienzi, "it is near upon midnight—our friends await me."

"Go, then, my soul's best half! go; Nina shall not detain thee one moment from those higher objects which make thee so dear to Nina. When—when shall we meet again?"

"Not," said Rienzi, proudly, and with all his soul upon his brow, "not thus, by stealth; no! nor as I thus have met thee, the obscure and contemned bondsman! When next thou seest me, it shall be at the head of the sons of Rome! her champion! her restorer! or——" said he, sinking his voice—

"There is no *or*!" interrupted Nina, weaving her arms round him, and catching his enthusiasm; "thou hast uttered thine own destiny!"

"One kiss more!—farewell!—the tenth day from the morrow shines upon the restoration of Rome!"

CHAPTER XII.

The strange Adventures that befell Walter de Montreal.

It was upon that same evening, and while the earlier stars yet shone over the city, that Walter de Montreal, returning, alone, to the convent then associated with the church of Santa Maria del Priorata (both of which belonged to the Knights of the Hospital, and in the first of which Montreal had taken his lodgment), paused amidst the ruins and desolation which lay around his path. Though little skilled in the classic memories and associations of the spot, he could not but be impressed with the surrounding witnesses of departed empire; the vast skeleton, as it were, of the dead giantess.

“Now,” thought he, as he gazed around upon the roofless columns and shattered walls, everywhere visible, over which the starlight shone, ghastly and transparent, backed by the frowning and embattled fortresses of the Frangipani, half hid by the dark foliage that sprang up amidst the very fanes and palaces of old—Nature exulting over the frailer Art; “Now,” thought he, “bookmen would be inspired, by this scene, with fantastic and dreaming visions of the past. But to me

these monuments of high ambition and royal splendour create only images of the future. Rome may yet be, with her seven-hilled diadem, as Rome has been before, the prize of the strongest hand and the boldest warrior—revived, not by her own degenerate sons, but the infused blood of a new race. William the Bastard could scarce have found the hardy Englishers so easy a conquest as Walter the Well-born may find these eunuch Romans. And which conquest were the more glorious—the barbarous Isle, or the Metropolis of the World? Short step from the general to the podesta—shorter step from the podesta to the king!”

While thus revolving his wild, yet not altogether chimerical ambition, a quick light step was heard amidst the long herbage, and, looking up, Montreal perceived the figure of a tall female descending from that part of the hill then covered by many convents, towards the base of the Aventine. She supported her steps with a long staff, and moved with such elasticity and erectness, that now, as her face became visible by the starlight, it was surprising to perceive that it was the face of one advanced in years—a harsh, proud countenance, withered, and deeply wrinkled, but not without a certain regularity of outline.

“Merciful Virgin!” cried Montreal, starting back as that face gleamed upon him: “is it possible? It is she!—it is——”

He sprang forward, and stood right before the old woman, who seemed equally surprised, though more dismayed, at the sight of Montreal.

“I have sought thee for years,” said the knight, first breaking the silence; “years, long years—thy conscience can tell thee why.”

“*Mine*, man of blood!” cried the female, trembling with rage or fear; “darest *thou* talk of conscience? *Thou*, the dishonourer—the robber—the professed homicide! *Thou*, disgrace to knighthood and to birth! *Thou*, with the cross of chastity and of peace upon thy breast! *Thou* talk of conscience, hypocrite!—thou?”

“Lady—lady!” said Montreal, deprecatingly, and almost quailing beneath the fiery passion of that feeble woman, “I have sinned against thee and thine. But remember all my excuses!—early love—fatal obstacles—rash vow—irresistible temptation! Perhaps,” he added, in a more haughty tone, “perhaps, yet, I may have the power to atone my error, and wring, with mailed hand, from the successor of St Peter, who hath power to loose as to bind——”

“Perjured and abandoned!” interrupted the female; “dost thou dream that violence can purchase absolution, or that thou canst ever atone the past?—a noble name disgraced, a father’s broken heart and dying curse! Yes, that curse, I hear it now! it rings upon me thrillingly, as when I watched the expiring clay! it cleaves to thee—it pursues thee—it shall pierce thee through thy corselet—it shall smite thee in the meridian of thy power! Genius wasted—ambition blasted—penitence deferred—a life of brawls, and a death of shame—thy destruction the offspring of thy crime! To this, to this,

an old man's curse hath doomed thee!—AND THOU ART DOOMED!”

These words were rather shrieked than spoken: and the flashing eye, the lifted hand, the dilated form of the speaker—the hour—the solitude of the ruins around—all conspired to give to the fearful execration the character of prophecy. The warrior, against whose undaunted breast a hundred spears had shivered in vain, fell appalled and humbled to the ground. He seized the hem of his fierce denouncer's robe, and cried, in a choked and hollow voice, “Spare me! spare me!”

“Spare thee!” said the unrelenting crone; “hast *thou* ever spared man in thy hatred, or woman in thy lust! Ah, grovel in the dust!—crouch—crouch!—wild beast as thou art! whose sleek skin and beautiful hues have taught the unwary to be blind to the talons that rend, and the grinders that devour:—crouch, that the foot of the old and impotent may spurn thee!”

“Hag!” cried Montreal, in the reaction of sudden fury and maddened pride, springing up to the full height of his stature. “Hag! thou hast passed the limits to which, remembering who thou art, my forbearance gave thee licence. I had well-nigh forgot that thou hadst assumed my part—I am the accuser! Woman!—the boy!—shrink not! equivocate not! lie not!—thou wert the thief!”

“I was. Thou taughtest me the lesson how to steal a——”

“Render—restore him,” interrupted Montreal, stamping on the ground with such force that the splinters of

the marble fragments on which he stood shivered under his armed heel.

The woman little heeded a violence at which the fiercest warrior of Italy might have trembled ; but she did not make an immediate answer. The character of her countenance altered from passion into an expression of grave, intent, and melancholy thought. At length she replied to Montreal ; whose hand had wandered to his dagger-hilt, with the instinct of long habit, whenever enraged or thwarted, rather than from any design of blood ; which, stern and vindictive as he was, he would have been incapable of forming against any woman—much less against the one then before him.

“Walter de Montreal,” said she, in a voice so calm that it almost sounded like that of compassion, “the boy, I think, has never known brother or sister : the only child of a once haughty and lordly race, on both sides, though now on both dishonoured—nay, why so impatient ? thou wilt soon learn the worst—the boy is dead !”

“Dead !” repeated Montreal, recoiling and growing pale ; “dead !—no, no—say not that ! He has a mother—you know he has !—a fond, meek-hearted, anxious, hoping mother !—no !—no, he is not dead !”

“Thou canst feel, then, for a mother ?” said the old woman, seemingly touched by the tone of the Provençal. “Yet, bethink thee ; is it not better that the grave should save him from a life of riot, of bloodshed, and of crime ? Better to sleep with God than to wake with the fiends !”

“Dead!” echoed Montreal; “dead!—the pretty one!—so young!—those eyes—the mother’s eyes—closed so soon?”

“Hast thou aught else to say? Thy sight scares my very womanhood from my soul;—let me be gone.”

“Dead!—may I believe thee? or dost thou mock me? Thou hast uttered *thy* curse, hearken to *my* warning:—If thou hast lied in this, thy last hour shall dismay thee, and thy deathbed shall be the deathbed of despair!”

“Thy lips,” replied the female, with a scornful smile, “are better adapted for lewd vows to unhappy maidens, than for the denunciations which sound solemn only when coming from the good. Farewell!”

“Stay! inexorable woman! stay! where sleeps he? Masses shall be sung! priests shall pray!—the sins of the father shall not be visited on that young head!”

“At Florence,” returned the woman, hastily. “But no stone records the departed one!—The dead boy had no name!”

Waiting for no further questionings, the woman now passed on—pursued her way;—and the long herbage, and the winding descent, soon snatched her ill-omened apparition from the desolate landscape.

Montreal, thus alone, sunk with a deep and heavy sigh upon the ground, covered his face with his hands, and burst into an agony of grief; his chest heaved, his whole frame trembled, and he wept and sobbed aloud, with all the fearful vehemence of a man whose passions

are strong and fierce, but to whom the violence of grief alone is novel and unfamiliar.

He remained thus, prostrate and unmanned, for a considerable time, growing slowly and gradually more calm, as tears relieved his emotion, and, at length, rather indulging a gloomy reverie than a passionate grief. The moon was high and the hour late when he arose, and then few traces of the past excitement remained upon his countenance; for Walter de Montreal was not of that mould in which woe can force a settlement, or to which any affliction can bring the continued and habitual melancholy that darkens those who feel more enduringly, though with emotions less stormy. His were the elements of the true Franc character, though carried to excess; his sternest and his deepest qualities were mingled with fickleness and caprice; his profound sagacity often frustrated by a whim; his towering ambition deserted for some frivolous temptation; and his elastic, sanguine, and high-spirited nature, faithful only to the desire of military glory, to the poetry of a daring and stormy life, and to the susceptibilities of that tender passion without whose colourings no portrait of chivalry is complete, and in which he was capable of a sentiment, a tenderness, and a loyal devotion, which could hardly have been supposed compatible with his reckless levity and his undisciplined career.

“Well,” said he, as he rose slowly, folded his mantle round him, and resumed his way, “it was not for *myself* I grieved thus. But the pang is past, and the

worst is known. Now, then, back to those things that never die—restless projects and daring schemes. That hag's curse keeps my blood cold still, and this solitude has something in it weird and awful. Ha!—what sudden light is that?"

The light which caught Montreal's eye broke forth almost like a star, scarcely larger, indeed, but more red and intense in its ray. Of itself it was nothing uncommon, and might have shone either from convent or cottage. But it streamed from a part of the Aventine which contained no habitations of the living, but only the empty ruins and shattered porticos, of which even the names and memories of the ancient inhabitants were dead. Aware of this, Montreal felt a slight awe (as the beam threw its steady light over the dreary landscape); for he was not without the knightly superstitions of the age, and it was now the witching hour consecrated to ghost and spirit. But fear, whether of this world or the next, could not long daunt the mind of the hardy freebooter; and, after a short hesitation, he resolved to make a digression from his way, and ascertain the cause of the phenomenon. Unconsciously, the martial tread of the barbarian passed over the site of the famed, or infamous, Temple of Isis, which had once witnessed those wildest orgies commemorated by Juvenal; and came at last to a thick and dark copse, from an opening in the centre of which gleamed the mysterious light. Penetrating the gloomy foliage, the knight now found himself before a large ruin, grey and roofless, from within which came, indistinct and

muffled, the sound of voices. Through a rent in the wall, forming a kind of casement, and about ten feet from the ground, the light now broke over the matted and rank soil, embedded, as it were, in vast masses of shade, and streaming through a mouldering portico hard at hand. The Provençal stood, though he knew it not, on the very place once consecrated by the Temple: the Portico and the Library of Liberty (the first public library instituted in Rome). The wall of the ruin was covered with innumerable creepers and wild brushwood, and it required but little agility on the part of Montreal, by the help of these, to raise himself to the height of the aperture, and, concealed by the luxuriant foliage, to gaze within. He saw a table, lighted with tapers, in the centre of which was a crucifix; a dagger, unsheathed; an open scroll, which the event proved to be of sacred character; and a brazen bowl. About a hundred men, in cloaks, and with black vizards, stood motionless around; and one, taller than the rest, without disguise or mask—whose pale brow and stern features seemed by that light yet paler and yet more stern—appeared to be concluding some address to his companions.

“Yes,” said he, “in the church of the Lateran I will make the last appeal to the people. Supported by the Vicar of the Pope, myself an officer of the Pontiff, it will be seen that Religion and Liberty—the heroes and the martyrs—are united in one cause. After that time, words are idle; action must begin. By this crucifix I pledge my faith, on this blade I

devote my life, to the regeneration of Rome! And you (then no need for mask or mantle!) when the solitary trump is heard, when the solitary horseman is seen,—*you* swear to rally round the standard of the Republic, and resist—with heart and hand, with life and soul, in defiance of death, and in hope of redemption—the arms of the oppressor!”

“We swear—we swear!” exclaimed every voice: and, crowding toward cross and weapon, the tapers were obscured by the intervening throng, and Mont-real could not perceive the ceremony, nor hear the muttered formula of the oath: but he could guess that the rite then common to conspiracies—and which required each conspirator to shed some drops of his own blood, in token that life itself was devoted to the enterprise—had not been omitted, when, the group again receding, the same figure as before had addressed the meeting, holding on high the bowl with both hands,—while from the left arm, which was bared, the blood weltered slowly, and trickled, drop by drop, upon the ground,—said, in a solemn voice and upturned eyes:

“Amidst the ruins of thy temple, O Liberty! we, Romans, dedicate to thee this libation! We, befriended and inspired by no unreal and fabled idols, but by the Lord of Hosts, and Him who, descending to earth, appealed not to emperors and to princes, but to the fisherman and the peasant,—giving to the lowly and the poor the mission of Revelation.” Then, turn-

ing suddenly to his companions, as his features, singularly varying in their character and expression, brightened, from solemn awe, into a martial and kindling enthusiasm, he cried aloud, "Death to the Tyranny ! Life to the Republic !" The effect of the transition was startling. Each man, as by an involuntary and irresistible impulse, laid his hand upon his sword, as he echoed the sentiment ; some, indeed, drew forth their blades, as if for instant action.

"I have seen enow ; they will break up anon," said Montreal to himself : "and I would rather face an army of thousands than even half-a-dozen enthusiasts, so inflamed,—and I thus detected." And, with this thought, he dropped on the ground, and glided away, as, once again, through the still midnight air, broke upon his ear the muffled shout—"DEATH TO THE TYRANNY !—LIFE TO THE REPUBLIC !"

BOOK II.

THE REVOLUTION.

Ogni lascivia, ogni male ; nulla giustizia, nullo freno. Non c' era più remedia, ogni persona periva. Allora Cola di Rienzi, &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. chap. ii.

Every kind of lewdness, every form of evil ; no justice, no restraint. Remedy there was none ; perdition fell on all. Then Cola di Rienzi, &c.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The Knight of Provence and his Proposal.

IT was nearly noon as Adrian entered the gates of the palace of Stephen Colonna. The palaces of the nobles were not then as we see them now, receptacles for the immortal canvass of Italian, and the imperishable sculpture of Grecian Art; but still to this day are retained the massive walls, and barred windows, and spacious courts, which at that time protected their rude retainers. High above the gates rose a lofty and solid tower, whose height commanded a wide view of the mutilated remains of Rome: the gate itself was adorned and strengthened on either side by columns of granite, whose Doric capitals betrayed the sacrilege that had torn them from one of the many temples that had formerly crowded the sacred Forum. From the same spoils came, too, the vast fragments of travertine which made the walls of the outer court. So common at that

day were these barbarous appropriations of the most precious monuments of art, that the columns and domes of earlier Rome were regarded by all classes but as quarries, from which every man was free to gather the materials, whether for his castle or his cottage,—a wantonness of outrage far greater than the Goths, to whom a later age would fain have attributed all the disgrace, and which, more perhaps than even heavier offences, excited the classical indignation of Petrarch, and made him sympathise with Rienzi in his hopes of Rome. Still may you see the churches of that or even earlier dates, of the most shapeless architecture, built on the sites, and from the marbles, consecrating (rather than consecrated by) the names of Venus, of Jupiter, of Minerva. The palace of the Prince of the Orsini, Duke of Gravina, is yet reared above the graceful arches (still visible) of the theatre of Marcellus ; then a fortress of the Savelli.

As Adrian passed the court, a heavy waggon blocked up the way, laden with huge marbles, dug from the unexhausted mine of the Golden House of Nero : they were intended for an additional tower, by which Stephen Colonna proposed yet more to strengthen the tasteless and barbarous edifice in which the old noble maintained the dignity of outraging the law.

The friend of Petrarch and the pupil of Rienzi sighed deeply as he passed this vehicle of new spoliations, and as a pillar of fluted alabaster, rolling carelessly from the waggon, fell with a loud crash upon the pavement. At the foot of the stairs grouped some

dozen of the bandits whom the old Colonna entertained: they were playing at dice upon an ancient tomb, the clear and deep inscription on which (so different from the slovenly character of the later empire) bespoke it a memorial of the most powerful age of Rome, and which, now empty even of ashes, and upset, served for a table to these foreign savages, and was strewn, even at that early hour, with fragments of meat and flasks of wine. They scarcely stirred, they scarcely looked up, as the young noble passed them; and their fierce oaths and loud ejaculations, uttered in a northern *patois*, grated harsh upon his ear, as he mounted, with a slow step, the lofty and unclean stairs. He came into a vast antechamber, which was half filled with the higher class of the patrician's retainers: some five or six pages, chosen from the inferior noblesse, congregated by a narrow and deep-sunk casement, were discussing the grave matters of gallantry and intrigue; three petty chieftains of the band below, with their corselets donned, and their swords and casques beside them, were sitting, stolid and silent, at a table, in the middle of the room, and might have been taken for automats, save for the solemn regularity with which they ever and anon lifted to their moustachioed lips their several goblets, and then, with a complacent grunt, resettled to their contemplations. Striking was the contrast which their northern phlegm presented to a crowd of Italian clients, and petitioners, and parasites, who walked restlessly to and fro, talking loudly to each other

with all the vehement gestures and varying physiognomy of southern vivacity. There was a general stir and sensation as Adrian broke upon this miscellaneous company. The bandit captains nodded their heads mechanically; the pages bowed, and admired the fashion of his plume and hose; the clients, and petitioners, and parasites, crowded round him, each with a separate request for interest with his potent kinsman. Great need had Adrian of his wonted urbanity and address, in extricating himself from their grasp; and painfully did he win, at last, the low and narrow door, at which stood a tall servitor, who admitted or rejected the applicants, according to his interest or caprice.

"Is the baron alone?" asked Adrian.

"Why, no, my lord: a foreign signor is with him—but to you he is of course visible."

"Well, you may admit me. I would inquire of his health."

The servitor opened the door—through whose aperture peered many a jealous and wistful eye—and consigned Adrian to the guidance of a page, who, older and of greater esteem than the loiterers in the ante-room, was the especial henchman of the lord of the castle. Passing another, but empty chamber, vast and dreary, Adrian found himself in a small cabinet, and in the presence of his kinsman.

Before a table, bearing the implements of writing, sate the old Colonna; a robe of rich furs and velvet hung loose upon his tall and stately frame; from a round skull-cap, of comforting warmth and crimson

hue, a few grey locks descended, and mixed with a long and reverent beard. The countenance of the aged noble, who had long passed his eightieth year, still retained the traces of a comeliness for which in earlier manhood he was remarkable. His eyes, if deep-sunken, were still keen and lively, and sparkled with all the fire of youth; his mouth curved upward in a pleasant, though half-satiric, smile; and his appearance, on the whole, was prepossessing and commanding, indicating rather the high blood, the shrewd wit, and the gallant valour of the patrician, than his craft, hypocrisy, and habitual but disdainful spirit of oppression.

Stephen Colonna, without being absolutely a hero, was indeed far braver than most of the Romans, though he held fast to the Italian maxim, never to fight an enemy while it is possible to cheat him. Two faults, however, marred the effect of his sagacity: a supreme insolence of disposition, and a profound belief in the lights of his experience. He was incapable of analogy. What had never happened in his time, he was perfectly persuaded never could happen. Thus, though generally esteemed an able diplomatist, he had the cunning of the intrigant, and not the providence of a statesman. If, however, pride made him arrogant in prosperity, it supported him in misfortune. And in the earlier vicissitudes of a life which had partly been consumed in exile, he had developed many noble qualities of fortitude, endurance, and real greatness of soul, which showed that his failings were rather acquired by

circumstance than derived from nature. His numerous and high-born race were proud of their chief—and with justice; for he was the ablest and most honoured, not only of the direct branch of the Colonna, but also, perhaps, of all the more powerful barons.

Seated at the same table with Stephen Colonna was a man of noble presence, of about three or four and thirty years of age, in whom Adrian instantly recognised Walter de Montreal. This celebrated knight was scarcely of the personal appearance which might have corresponded with the terror his name generally excited. His face was handsome, almost to the extreme of womanish delicacy. His fair hair waved long and freely over a white and unwrinkled forehead: the life of a camp and the suns of Italy had but little embrowned his clear and healthful complexion, which retained much of the bloom of youth. His features were aquiline and regular: his eyes, of a light hazel, were large, bright, and penetrating: and a short but curled beard and mustache, trimmed with soldier-like precision, and very little darker than the hair, gave indeed a martial expression to his comely countenance, but rather the expression which might have suited the hero of courts and tournaments than the chief of a brigand's camp. The aspect, manner, and bearing of the Provençal were those which captivate rather than awe—blending, as they did, a certain military frankness with the easy and graceful dignity of one conscious of gentle birth, and accustomed to mix on equal terms with the great and noble. His form happily contrasted

and elevated the character of a countenance which required strength and stature to free its uncommon beauty from the charge of effeminacy, being of great height and remarkable muscular power, without the least approach to clumsy and unwieldy bulk: it erred, indeed, rather to the side of leanness than flesh,—at once robust and slender. But the chief personal distinction of this warrior, the most redoubted lance of Italy, was an air and carriage of chivalric and heroic grace, greatly set off at this time by his splendid dress, which was of brown velvet sown with pearls, over which hung the surcoat worn by the Knights of the Hospital, whereon was wrought, in white, the eight-pointed cross that made the badge of his order. The knight's attitude was that of earnest conversation, bending slightly forward towards the Colonna, and resting both his hands—which (according to the usual distinction of the old Norman race,* from whom, though born in Provence, Montreal boasted his descent) were small and delicate, the fingers being covered with jewels, as was the fashion of the day—upon the golden hilt of an enormous sword, on the sheath of which was elaborately wrought the silver lilies that made the device of the Provençal Brotherhood of Jerusalem.

* Small hands and feet, however disproportioned to the rest of the person, were at that time deemed no less a distinction of the well-born, than they have been in a more refined age. Many readers will remember the pain occasioned to Petrarch by his tight shoes. The supposed beauty of this peculiarity is more derived from the feudal than the classic time.

“Good morrow, fair kinsman!” said Stephen. “Seat thyself, I pray; and know in this knightly visitor the celebrated *Sieur de Montreal*.”

“Ah, my lord,” said *Montreal*, smiling, as he saluted Adrian; “and how is my lady at home?”

“You mistake, sir knight,” quoth Stephen; “my young kinsman is not yet married: ’faith, as Pope Boniface remarked, when he lay stretched on a sick-bed, and his confessor talked to him about Abraham’s bosom, ‘that is a pleasure the greater for being deferred.’”

“The signor will pardon my mistake,” returned *Montreal*.

“But not,” said Adrian, “the neglect of Sir Walter in not ascertaining the fact in person. My thanks to him, noble kinsman, are greater than you weet of; and he promised to visit me, that he might receive them at leisure.”

“I assure you, signor,” answered *Montreal*, “that I have not forgotten the invitation; but so weighty hitherto have been my affairs at Rome, that I have been obliged to parley with my impatience to better our acquaintance.”

“Oh, ye knew each other before!” said Stephen. “And how!”

“My lord, there is a damsel in the case!” replied *Montreal*. “Excuse my silence.”

“Ah, Adrian, Adrian! when will you learn my continence!” said Stephen, solemnly stroking his grey beard. “What an example I set you! But a truce

to this light conversation—let us resume our theme. You must know, Adrian, that it is to the brave band of my guest I am indebted for those valiant gentlemen below, who keep Rome so quiet, though my poor habitation so noisy. He has called to proffer more assistance, if need be; and to advise me on the affairs of Northern Italy. Continue, I pray thee, sir knight; I have no disguises from my kinsman.”

“Thou seest,” said Montreal, fixing his penetrating eyes on Adrian—“thou seest, doubtless, my lord, that Italy at this moment presents to us a remarkable spectacle. It is a contest between two opposing powers, which shall destroy the other. The one power is that of the unruly and turbulent people—a power which they call ‘Liberty;’ the other power is that of the chiefs and princes—a power which they more appropriately call ‘Order.’ Between these parties the cities of Italy are divided. In Florence, in Genoa, in Pisa, for instance, is established a Free State—a Republic, God wot! and a more riotous, unhappy state of government cannot well be imagined.”

“That is perfectly true,” quoth Stephen; “they banished my own first cousin from Genoa.”

“A perpetual strife, in short,” continued Montreal, “between the great families; an alternation of prosecutions, and confiscations, and banishments: to-day, the Guelphs proscribe the Ghibellines—to-morrow, the Ghibellines drive out the Guelphs. This may be liberty, but it is the liberty of the strong against the weak. In the other cities, as Milan, as Verona, as

Bologna, the people are under the rule of one man—who calls himself a prince, and whom his enemies call a tyrant. Having more force than any other citizen, he preserves a firm government; having more constant demand on his intellect and energies than the other citizens, he also preserves a wise one. These two orders of government are enlisted against each other: whenever the people in the one rebel against their prince, the people of the other—that is, the Free States—send arms and money to their assistance.”

“You hear, Adrian, how wicked those last are,” quoth Stephen.

“Now it seems to me,” continued Montreal, “that this contest must end some time or other. All Italy must become republican or monarchical. It is easy to predict which will be the result.”

“Yes, liberty must conquer in the end!” said Adrian, warmly.

“Pardon me, young lord; my opinion is entirely the reverse. You perceive that these republics are commercial,—are traders; they esteem wealth, they despise valour, they cultivate all trades save that of the armourer. Accordingly, how do they maintain themselves in war? By their own citizens? Not a whit of it! Either they send to some foreign chief, and promise, if he grant them his protection, the principality of the city for five or ten years in return; or else they borrow, from some hardy adventurer like myself, as many troops as they can afford to pay for. Is it not so, Lord Adrian?”

Adrian nodded his reluctant assent.

“ Well, then, it is the fault of the foreign chief if he do not make his power permanent ; as has been already done in states once free by the Visconti and the Scala : or else it is the fault of the captain of the mercenaries if he do not convert his brigands into senators, and himself into a king. These are events so natural, that one day or other they will occur throughout all Italy. And all Italy will then become monarchical. Now it seems to me the interest of all the powerful families—your own, at Rome, as that of the Visconti, at Milan—to expedite this epoch, and to check, while you yet may with ease, that rebellious contagion amongst the people which is now rapidly spreading, and which ends in the fever of licence to them, but in the corruption of death to you. In these Free States, the nobles are the first to suffer : first your privileges, then your property, are swept away. Nay, in Florence, as ye well know, my lords, no noble is even capable of holding the meanest office in the state ? ”

“ Villains ! ” said Colonna, “ they violate the first law of nature ! ”

“ At this moment, ” resumed Montreal, who, engrossed with his subject, little heeded the interruptions he received from the holy indignation of the baron :—“ at this moment there are many—the wisest, perhaps, in the Free States—who desire to renew the old Lombard leagues, in defence of their common freedom everywhere, and against whosoever shall aspire to be prince. Fortunately, the deadly jealousies between

these merchant states—the base plebeian jealousies, more of trade than of glory—interpose at present an irresistible obstacle to this design ; and Florence, the most stirring and the most esteemed of all, is happily so reduced by reverses of commerce as to be utterly unable to follow out so great an undertaking. Now, then, is the time for us, my lords ; while these obstacles are so great for our foes, now is the time for us to form and cement a counter-league between all the princes of Italy. To you, noble Stephen, I have come, as your rank demands,—alone, of all the barons of Rome,—to propose to you this honourable union. Observe what advantages it proffers to your house. The popes have abandoned Rome for ever ; there is no counterpoise to your ambition,—there need be none to your power. You see before you the examples of Visconti and Taddeo di Pepoli. You may found in Rome, the first city of Italy, a supreme and uncontrolled principality, subjugate utterly your weaker rivals,—the Savelli, the Malatesta, the Orsini,—and leave to your sons' sons an hereditary kingdom that may aspire once more, perhaps, to the empire of the world.”

Stephen shaded his face with his hand as he answered : “ But this, noble Montreal, requires means :—money and men.”

“ Of the last, you can command from me enow—my small company, the best disciplined, can (whenever I please) swell to the most numerous in Italy : in the first, noble baron, the rich house of Colonna cannot fail ; and even a mortgage on its vast estates may be

well repaid when you have possessed yourselves of the whole revenues of Rome. You see," continued Montreal, turning to Adrian, in whose youth he expected a more warm ally than in his hoary kinsman :—"you see, at a glance, how feasible is this project, and what a mighty field it opens to your house."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, rising from his seat, and giving vent to the indignation he had with difficulty suppressed, "I grieve much that, beneath the roof of the first citizen of Rome, a stranger should attempt thus calmly, and, without interruption, to excite the ambition of emulating the execrated celebrity of a Visconti or a Pepoli. Speak, my lord ! [turning to Stephen]—speak, noble kinsman ! and tell this knight of Provence, that if by a Colonna the ancient grandeur of Rome cannot be restored, it shall not be, at least, by a Colonna that her last wrecks of liberty shall be swept away."

"How now, Adrian !—how now, sweet kinsman !" said Stephen, thus suddenly appealed to, "calm thyself, I pr'ythee. Noble Sir Walter, he is young—young and hasty—he means not to offend thee."

"Of that I am persuaded," returned Montreal, coldly, but with great and courteous command of temper. "He speaks from the impulse of the moment,—a praiseworthy fault in youth. It was mine at his age, and many a time have I nearly lost my life for the rashness. Nay, signor, nay !—touch not your sword so meaningly, as if you fancied I intimated a threat ;

far from me such presumption. I have learned sufficient caution, believe me, in the wars, not wantonly to draw against me a blade which I have seen wielded against such odds."

Touched, despite himself, by the courtesy of the knight, and the allusion to a scene in which, perhaps, his life had been preserved by Montreal, Adrian extended his hand to the latter.

"I was to blame for my haste," said he, frankly ; "but know, by my very heat," he added more gravely, "that your project will find no friends among the Colonna. Nay, in the presence of my noble kinsman, I dare to tell you, that could even his high sanction lend itself to such a scheme, the best hearts of his house would desert him ; and I myself, his kinsman, would man yonder castle against so unnatural an ambition !"

A slight and scarce perceptible cloud passed over Montreal's countenance at these words ; and he bit his lip ere he replied—

"Yet if the Orsini be less scrupulous, their first exertion of power would be heard in the crashing house of the Colonna."

"Know you," returned Adrian, "that one of our mottoes is this haughty address to the Romans,—'if we fall, ye fall also !' And better that fate, than a rise upon the wrecks of her native city."

"Well, well, well !" said Montreal, reseating himself, "I see that I must leave Rome to herself,—the League must thrive without her aid. I did but jest touching the Orsini, for they have not the power that

would make their efforts safe. Let us sweep, then, our past conference from our recollection. It is the nineteenth, I think, Lord Colonna, on which you propose to repair to Corneto with your friends and retainers, and on which you have invited my attendance?"

"It is on that day, sir knight," replied the baron, evidently much relieved by the turn the conversation had assumed. "The fact is, that we have been so charged with indifference to the interests of the good people, that I strain a point in this expedition to contradict the assertion; and we propose, therefore, to escort and protect, against the robbers of the road, a convoy of corn to Corneto. In truth, I may add another reason, besides fear of the robbers, that makes me desire as numerous a train as possible. I wish to show my enemies, and the people generally, the solid and growing power of my house; the display of such an armed band as I hope to levy, will be a magnificent occasion to strike awe into the riotous and refractory. Adrian, you will collect your servitors, I trust, on that day; we would not be without you."

"And as we ride along, fair signor," said Montreal, inclining to Adrian, "we will find at least one subject on which we can agree: all brave men and true knights have one common topic,—and its name is Woman. You must make me acquainted with the names of the fairest dames of Rome; and we will discuss old adventures in the Parliament of Love, and hope for new. By the way, I suppose, Lord Adrian, you, with the rest of your countrymen, are Petrarch-stricken?"

“Do you not share our enthusiasm? slur not so your gallantry, I pray you.”

“Come, we must not again disagree; but, by my halidame, I think one troubadour roundel worth all that Petrarch ever wrote. He has but borrowed from our knightly poesy, to disguise it, like a carpet coxcomb.”

“Well,” said Adrian, gaily, “for every line of the troubadours that you quote, I will cite you another. I will forgive you for injustice to Petrarch, if you are just to the troubadours.”

“Just!” cried Montreal, with real enthusiasm: “I am of the land, nay, the very blood of the troubadour! But we grow too light for your noble kinsman! and it is time for me to bid you, for the present, farewell. My lord Colonna, peace be with you; farewell, Sir Adrian,—brother mine in knighthood,—remember your challenge.”

And with an easy and careless grace the Knight of St John took his leave. The old baron, making a dumb sign of excuse to Adrian, followed Montreal into the adjoining room.

“Sir knight!” said he, “sir knight!” as he closed the door upon Adrian, and then drew Montreal to the recess of the casement,—“a word in your ear. Think not I slight your offer, but these young men must be managed; the plot is great—noble—grateful to my heart; but it requires time and caution. I have many of my house, scrupulous as yon hotskull to win over; the way is pleasant, but must be sounded well and carefully; you understand?”

From under his bent brows, Montreal darted one keen glance at Stephen, and then answered—

“My friendship for you dictated my offer. The League may stand without the Colonna,—beware a time when the Colonna cannot stand without the League. My lord, look well around you; there are more freemen—ay, bold and stirring ones too—in Rome, than you imagine. Beware, Rienzi! Adieu, we meet soon again.”

Thus saying, Montreal departed, soliloquising as he passed with his careless step through the crowded ante-room :—

“I shall fail here!—these caitiff nobles have neither the courage to be great, nor the wisdom to be honest. Let them fall!—I may find an adventurer from the people, an adventurer like myself, worth them all.”

No sooner had Stephen returned to Adrian than he flung his arms affectionately round his ward, who was preparing his pride for some sharp rebuke for his petulance.

“Nobly feigned,—admirable, admirable!” cried the baron; “you have learned the true art of a statesman at the emperor’s court. I always thought you would—always said it. You saw the dilemma I was in, thus taken by surprise by that barbarian’s mad scheme; afraid to refuse,—more afraid to accept. You extricated me with consummate address; that passion,—so natural to your age,—was a famous feint; drew off the attack; gave me time to breathe; allowed me to play with the savage. But we must not offend him, you know: all my retainers would desert me, or sell me to

the Orsini, or cut my throat, if he but held up his finger. Oh ! it was admirably managed, Adrian—admirably !”

“Thank Heaven !” said Adrian, with some difficulty recovering the breath, which his astonishment had taken away, “you do not think of embracing that black proposition !”

“Think of it ! no, indeed !” said Stephen, throwing himself back on his chair. “Why, do you not know my age, boy ? Hard on my ninetieth year, I should be a fool indeed to throw myself into such a whirl of turbulence and agitation. I want to keep what I have, not risk it by grasping more. Am I not the beloved of the pope ? shall I hazard his excommunication ? Am I not the most powerful of the nobles ? should I be more if I were king ? At my age, to talk to me of such stuff !—the man’s an idiot. Besides,” added the old man, sinking his voice, and looking fearfully round, “if I were a king, my sons might poison me for the succession. They are good lads, Adrian, very ! But such a temptation !—I would not throw it in their way ; these grey hairs have experience ! Tyrants don’t die a natural death ; no, no ! Plague on the knight, say I, he has already cast me into a cold sweat.”

Adrian gazed on the working features of the old man, whose selfishness thus preserved him from crime. He listened to his concluding words—full of the dark truth of the times ; and as the high and pure ambition of Rienzi flashed upon him in contrast, he felt that he could not blame its fervour, or wonder at its excess.

“And then, too,” resumed the baron, speaking more

deliberately as he recovered his self-possession, "this man, by way of a warning, shows me at a glance his whole ignorance of the state. What think you? he has mingled with the mob, and taken their rank breath for power; yes, he thinks words are soldiers, and bade me—me, Stephen Colonna—beware—of whom, think you? No, you will never guess!—of that speech-maker, Rienzi! my own old jesting guest! Ha! ha! ha! the ignorance of these barbarians! ha! ha! ha!" and the old man laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Yet many of the nobles fear that same Rienzi," said Adrian, gravely.

"Ah! let them, let them!—they have not our experience—our knowledge of the world, Adrian. Tut, man, when did declamation ever overthrow castles, and conquer soldiery? I like Rienzi to harangue the mob about old Rome, and such stuff; it gives them something to think of and prate about, and so all their fierceness evaporates in words; they might burn a house if they did not hear a speech. But now I am on that score, I must own the pedant has grown impudent in his new office; here, here,—I received this paper ere I rose to-day. I hear a similar insolence has been shown to all the nobles. Read it, will you?" and the Colonna put a scroll into his kinsman's hand.

"I have received the like," said Adrian, glancing at it. "It is a request of Rienzi's to attend at the Church of St John of Lateran, to hear explained the inscription on a table just discovered. It bears, he saith, the

most intimate connection with the welfare and state of Rome."

"Very entertaining, I dare to say, to professors and bookmen. Pardon me, kinsman ; I forgot your taste for these things ; and my son, Gianni, too, shares your fantasy. Well, well ! it is innocent enough ! Go—the man talks well."

"Will you not attend, too ?"

"I—my dear boy—I !" said the old Colonna, opening his eyes in such astonishment that Adrian could not help laughing at the simplicity of his own question.

CHAPTER II.

The Interview, and the Doubt.

As Adrian turned from the palace of his guardian, and bent his way in the direction of the Forum, he came somewhat unexpectedly upon Raimond, Bishop of Orvietto, who, mounted upon a low palfrey, and accompanied by some three or four of his waiting-men, halted abruptly when he recognised the young noble.

“Ah, my son! it is seldom that I see thee: how fares it with thee?—well? So, so! I rejoice to hear it. Alas! what a state of society is ours, when compared to the tranquil pleasures of Avignon! There, all men who, like us, are fond of the same pursuits, the same studies, *deliciæ musarum*, hum! hum! [the bishop was proud of an occasional quotation, right or wrong], are brought easily and naturally together. But here we scarcely dare stir out of our houses, save upon great occasions. But talking of great occasions, and the Muses, reminds me of our good Rienzi’s invitation to the Lateran: of course you will attend; ’tis a mighty knotty piece of Latin he proposes to solve—so I hear, at least; very interesting to us, my son, —very.”

“It is to-morrow,” answered Adrian. “Yes, assuredly : I will be there.”

“And, harkye, my son,” said the bishop, resting his hand affectionately on Adrian’s shoulder, “I have reason to hope that he will remind our poor citizens of the Jubilee for the year Fifty, and stir them towards clearing the road of the brigands : a necessary injunction, and one to be heeded timeously ; for who will come here for absolution when he stands a chance of rushing unannealed upon purgatory by the way ? You have heard Rienzi,—ay ? quite a Cicero—quite ! Well, Heaven bless you, my son ! you will not fail ?”

“Nay, not I.”

“Yet, stay—a word with you : just suggest to all whom you may meet the advisability of a full meeting ; it looks well for the city to show respect to letters.”

“To say nothing of the Jubilee,” added Adrian, smiling.

“Ah, to say nothing of the Jubilee—very good ! Adieu for the present !” And the bishop, resettling himself on his saddle, ambled solemnly on to visit his various friends, and press them to the meeting.

Meanwhile, Adrian continued his course till he had passed the Capitol, the Arch of Severus, the crumbling columns of the fane of Jupiter, and found himself amidst the long grass, the whispering reeds, and the neglected vines, that wave over the now-vanished pomp of the Golden House of Nero. Seating himself on a fallen pillar—by that spot where the traveller descends to the (so-called) Baths of Livia—he looked impatiently

to the sun, as if to blame it for the slowness of its march.

Not long, however, had he to wait before a light step was heard crushing the fragrant grass ; and presently through the arching vines gleamed a face that might well have seemed the nymph, the goddess of the scene.

“ My beautiful ! my Irene !—how shall I thank thee ! ”

It was long before the delighted lover suffered himself to observe upon Irene’s face a sadness that did not usually cloud it in his presence. Her voice, too, trembled ; her words seemed constrained and cold.

“ Have I offended thee ? ” he asked ; “ or what less misfortune hath occurred ? ”

Irene raised her eyes to her lover’s, and said, looking at him earnestly, “ Tell me, my lord, in sober and simple truth, tell me, would it grieve thee much were this to be our last meeting ? ”

Paler than the marble at his feet grew the dark cheek of Adrian. It was some moments ere he could reply, and he did so then with a forced smile and a quivering lip.

“ Jest not so, Irene ! Last !—that is not a word for us ! ”

“ But hear me, my lord —— ”

“ Why so cold ?—call me Adrian !—friend !—lover ! or be dumb ! ”

“ Well, then, my soul’s soul ! my all of hope ! my life’s life ! ” exclaimed Irene, passionately, “ hear me ! I fear that we stand at this moment upon some gulf,

whose depth I see not, but which may divide us for ever! Thou knowest the real nature of my brother, and dost not misread him as many do. Long has he planned, and schemed, and communed with himself, and, feeling his way amidst the people, prepared the path to some great design. But now (thou wilt not betray—thou wilt not injure him?—he is *thy* friend!)——”

“And thy brother! I would give my life for his! Say on!”

“But now, then,” resumed Irene, “the time for that enterprise, whatever it be, is coming fast. I know not of its exact nature, but I know that it is against the nobles—against thy order—against thy house itself! If it succeed—oh, Adrian! thou thyself mayst not be free from danger; and my name, at least, will be coupled with the name of thy foes. If it fail,—my brother, my bold brother, is swept away! He will fall a victim to revenge or justice, call it as you will. Your kinsman may be his judge—his executioner; and I—even if I should yet live to mourn over the boast and glory of my humble line—could I permit myself to love, to see, one in whose veins flowed the blood of his destroyer? Oh! I am wretched—wretched! these thoughts make me well-nigh mad!” and, wringing her hands bitterly, Irene sobbed aloud.

Adrian himself was struck forcibly by the picture thus presented to him, although the alternative it embraced had often before forced itself dimly on his mind. It was true, however, that, not seeing the

schemes of Rienzi backed by any physical power, and never yet having witnessed the mighty force of a moral revolution, he did not conceive that any rise to which he might instigate the people could be permanently successful: and, as for his punishment, in that city, where all justice was the slave of interest, Adrian knew himself powerful enough to obtain forgiveness even for the greatest of all crimes—armed insurrection against the nobles. As these thoughts recurred to him, he gained the courage to console and cheer Irene. But his efforts were only partially successful. Awakened by her fears to that consideration of the future which hitherto she had forgotten, Irene, for the first time, seemed deaf to the charmer's voice.

“Alas!” said she, sadly, “even at the best, what can this love, that we have so blindly encouraged—what can it end in? Thou must not wed one like me; and I! how foolish I have been!”

“Recall thy senses then, Irene,” said Adrian, proudly, partly perhaps in anger, partly in his experience of the sex. “Love another, and more wisely, if thou wilt; cancel thy vows with me, and continue to think it a crime to love, and a folly to be true!”

“Cruel!” said Irene, falteringly, and in her turn alarmed. “Dost thou speak in earnest?”

“Tell me, ere I answer you, tell me this: come death, come anguish, come a whole life of sorrow, as the end of this love, wouldst thou yet repent that thou hast loved? If so, thou knowest not the love that I feel for thee.”

“Never! never can I repent!” said Irene, falling upon Adrian’s neck: “forgive me!”

“But is there, in truth,” said Adrian, a little while after this lover-like quarrel and reconciliation; “is there, in truth, so marked a difference between thy brother’s past and his present bearing? How knowest thou that the time for action is so near?”

“Because now he sits closeted whole nights with all ranks of men: he shuts up his books—he reads no more,—but, when alone, walks to and fro his chamber, muttering to himself. Sometimes he pauses before the calendar, which of late he has fixed with his own hand against the wall, and passes his finger over the letters, till he comes to some chosen date, and then he plays with his sword and smiles. But two nights since, arms, too, in great number, were brought to the house; and I heard the chief of the men who brought them, a grim giant, known well amongst the people, say, as he wiped his brow,—‘These will see work soon!’”

“Arms! Are you sure of that?” said Adrian, anxiously. “Nay, then, there is more in these schemes than I imagined! But [observing Irene’s gaze bent fearfully on him as his voice changed, he added, more gaily]—but come what may, believe me, my beautiful, my adored, that while I live, thy brother shall not suffer from the wrath he may provoke; nor I, though he forget our ancient friendship, cease to love thee less.”

“Signor! signor! child! it is time—we must go!”

said the shrill voice of Benedetta, now peering through the foliage. "The working men pass home this way; I see them approaching."

The lovers parted; for the first time the serpent had penetrated into their Eden; they had conversed, they had thought, of other things than love.

CHAPTER III.

The Situation of a popular Patrician in times of Popular Discontent.—Scene of the Lateran.

THE situation of a patrician who honestly loves the people is, in those evil times when power oppresses and freedom struggles,—when the two divisions of men are wrestling against each other,—the most irksome and perplexing that destiny can possibly contrive. Shall he take part with the nobles?—he betrays his conscience! With the people?—he deserts his friends! But that consequence of the last alternative is not the sole—nor, perhaps, to a strong mind, the most severe. All men are swayed and chained by public opinion—it is the public judge; but public opinion is not the same for all ranks. The public opinion that excites or deters the plebeian, is the opinion of the plebeians,—of those whom he sees, and meets, and knows; of those with whom he is brought in contact,—those with whom he has mixed from childhood,—those whose praises are daily heard,—whose censure frowns upon him with every hour.*

* It is the same in still smaller divisions. The public opinion for lawyers is that of lawyers; of soldiers, that of the army; of scholars, it is that of men of literature and science. And to the

So, also, the public opinion of the great is the opinion of *their* equals,—of those whom birth and accident cast for ever in their way. This distinction is full of important practical deductions ; it is one which, more than most maxims, should never be forgotten by a politician who desires to be profound. It is, then, an ordeal terrible to pass—which few plebeians ever pass, which it is therefore unjust to expect patricians to cross unfalteringly—the ordeal of opposing the public opinion which exists for *them*. They cannot help doubting their own judgment,—they cannot help thinking the voice of wisdom or of virtue speaks in those sounds which have been deemed oracles from their cradle. In the tribunal of Sectarian prejudice they imagine they recognise the court of the universal conscience. Another powerful antidote to the activity of a patrician so placed, is in the certainty that to the last the motives of such activity will be alike misconstrued by the aristocracy he deserts and the people he joins. It seems so unnatural in a man to fly in the face of his own order, that the world is willing to

susceptible amongst the latter, the hostile criticism of learning has been more stinging than the severest moral censures of the vulgar. Many a man has done a great act, or composed a great work, solely to please the two or three persons constantly present to him. Their voice was *his* public opinion. The public opinion that operated on Bishop, the murderer, was the opinion of the burkers, his comrades. Did that condemn him? No! He knew no other public opinion till he came to be hanged, and caught the loathing eyes, and heard the hissing execrations of the crowd below his gibbet.

suppose any clue to the mystery save that of honest conviction or lofty patriotism. "Ambition!" says one. "Disappointment!" cries another. "Some private grudge!" hints a third. "Mob-courting vanity!" sneers a fourth. The people admire at first, but suspect afterwards. The moment he thwarts a popular wish, there is no redemption for him: he is accused of having acted the hypocrite,—of having worn the sheep's fleece: and now, say they,—"See! the wolf's teeth peep out!" Is he familiar with the people?—it is cajolery! Is he distant?—it is pride! What, then, sustains a man in such a situation, following his own conscience, with his eyes open to all the perils of the path? Away with the cant of public opinion,—away with the poor delusion of posthumous justice; he will offend the first, he will never obtain the last. What sustains him? HIS OWN SOUL! A man thoroughly great has a certain contempt for his kind while he aids them: their weal or woe are all; their applause—their blame—are nothing to him. He walks forth from the circle of birth and habit; he is deaf to the little motives of little men. High, through the widest space, his orbit may describe, he holds on his course to guide or to enlighten; but the noises below reach him not! Until the wheel is broken,—until the dark void swallow up the star,—it makes melody, night and day, to its own ear: thirsting for no sound from the earth it illumines, anxious for no companionship in the path through which it rolls, conscious of its own glory, and contented, therefore, to be *alone*!

But minds of this order are rare. All ages cannot produce them. They are exceptions to the ordinary and human virtue, which is influenced and regulated by external circumstance. At a time when even to be merely susceptible to the voice of fame was a great pre-eminence in moral energies over the rest of mankind, it would be impossible that any one should ever have formed the conception of that more refined and metaphysical sentiment, that purer excitement to high deeds—that glory in one's own heart, which is so immeasurably above the desire of a renown that lackeys the heels of others. In fact, before we can dispense with the world, we must, by a long and severe novitiate—by the probation of much thought, and much sorrow—by deep and sad conviction of the vanity of all that the world can give us, have raised ourselves—not in the fervour of an hour, but habitually—*above* the world:—an abstraction—an idealism—which, in our wiser age, how few, even of the wisest, can attain! Yet, till we are thus fortunate, we know not the true divinity of contemplation, nor the all-sufficing mightiness of conscience; nor can we retreat with solemn footsteps into that Holy of Holies in our own souls, wherein we know, and feel, how much our nature is capable of the self-existence of a God!

But to return to the things and thoughts of earth. Those considerations, and those links of circumstance, which in a similar situation have changed so many honest and courageous minds, changed also the mind of Adrian. He felt in a false position. His reason and

conscience shared in the schemes of Rienzi, and his natural hardihood and love of enterprise would have led him actively to share the danger of their execution. But this, all his associations, his friendships, his private and household ties, loudly forbade. Against his order, against his house, against the companions of his youth, how could he plot secretly, or act sternly? By the goal to which he was impelled by patriotism, stood hypocrisy and ingratitude. Who would believe him the honest champion of his country who was a traitor to his friends? Thus, indeed,

“The native hue of resolution
Was sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.”

And he who should have been by nature a leader of the time became only its spectator. Yet Adrian endeavoured to console himself for his present passiveness in a conviction of the policy of his conduct. He who takes no share in the commencement of civil revolutions, can often become, with the most effect, a mediator between the passions and the parties subsequently formed. Perhaps, under Adrian’s circumstances, delay was really the part of a prudent statesman; the very position which cripples at the first, often gives authority before the end. Clear from the excesses, and saved from the jealousies, of rival factions, all men are willing to look with complaisance and respect to a new actor in a turbulent drama; his moderation may make him trusted by the people; his rank enable him to be a fitting mediator with the nobles; and thus the qualities that would have rendered

him a martyr at one period of the Revolution, raise him perhaps into a saviour at another.

Silent, therefore, and passive, Adrian waited the progress of events. If the projects of Rienzi failed, he might, by that inactivity, the better preserve the people from new chains, and their champion from death. If those projects succeeded, he might equally save his house from the popular wrath—and, advocating liberty, check disorder. Such, at least, were his hopes; and thus did the Italian sagacity and caution of his character control and pacify the enthusiasm of youth and courage.

The sun shone, calm and cloudless, upon the vast concourse gathered before the broad space that surrounds the Church of St John of Lateran. Partly by curiosity—partly by the desire of the Bishop of Orvieto—partly because it was an occasion in which they could display the pomp of their retinues—many of the principal barons of Rome had gathered to this spot.

On one of the steps ascending to the church, with his mantle folded round him, stood Walter de Montreal, gazing on the various parties that, one after another, swept through the lane which the soldiers of the Church preserved unimpeded, in the middle of the crowd, for the access of the principal nobles. He watched with interest, though with his usual carelessness of air and roving glance, the different marks and looks of welcome given by the populace to the different personages of note. Banners and pennons preceded each signor, and as they waved aloft, the witticisms or nicknames—the

brief words of praise or censure, that imply so much—which passed to and fro among that lively crowd, were treasured carefully in his recollection.

“Make way, there! way for my Lord Martino Orsini—Baron di Porto!”

“Peace, minion! draw back! way for the Signor Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello, and Knight of the Empire.”

And at those two rival shouts, you saw waving on high the golden bear of the Orsini, with the motto—“Beware my embrace!” and the solitary column on an azure ground, of the Colonna, with Adrian’s especial device—“Sad, but strong.” The train of Martino Orsini was much more numerous than that of Adrian, which last consisted but of ten servitors. But Adrian’s men attracted far greater admiration amongst the crowd, and pleased more the experienced eye of the warlike Knight of St John. Their arms were polished like mirrors; their height was to an inch the same; their march was regular and sedate; their mien erect; they looked neither to the right nor left; they betrayed that ineffable discipline—that harmony of order—which Adrian had learned to impart to his men during his own apprenticeship of arms. But the disorderly train of the Lord of Porto was composed of men of all heights. Their arms were ill-polished and ill-fashioned, and they pressed confusedly on each other; they laughed and spoke aloud; and in their mien and bearing expressed all the insolence of men who despised alike the master they served and the people they awed. The two bands coming unex-

pectedly on each other through this narrow defile, the jealousy of the two houses presently declared itself. Each pressed forward for the precedence ; and, as the quiet regularity of Adrian's train, and even its compact paucity of numbers, enabled it to pass before the servitors of his rival, the populace set up a loud shout—"A Colonna for ever!"—"Let the Bear dance after the Column!"

"On, ye knaves!" said Orsini aloud to his men. "How have ye suffered this affront?" And passing himself to the head of his men, he would have advanced through the midst of his rival's train, had not a tall guard, in the pope's livery, placed his baton in the way.

"Pardon, my lord! we have the vicar's express commands to suffer no struggling of the different trains one with another."

"Knave! dost thou bandy words with me?" said the fierce Orsini; and with his sword he clove the baton in two.

"In the vicar's name, I command you to fall back!" said the sturdy guard, now placing his huge bulk in the very front of the noble's path.

"It is Cecco del Vecchio!" cried those of the populace who were near enough to perceive the interruption and its cause.

"Ay," said one, "the good vicar has put many of the stoutest fellows in the pope's livery, in order the better to keep peace. He could have chosen none better than Cecco."

"But he must not fall!" cried another, as Orsini,

glaring on the smith, drew back his sword as if to plunge it through his bosom.

“Shame—shame! shall the pope be thus insulted in his own city?” cried several voices. “Down with the sacrilegious—down!” And, as if by a preconcerted plan, a whole body of the mob broke at once through the lane, and swept like a torrent over Orsini and his jostled and ill-assorted train. Orsini himself was thrown on the ground with violence, and trampled upon by a hundred footsteps; his men, huddled and struggling as much against themselves as against the mob, were scattered and upset; and when, by a great effort of the guards, headed by the smith himself, order was again restored, and the line re-formed, Orsini, well-nigh choked with his rage and humiliation, and greatly bruised by the rude assaults he had received, could scarcely stir from the ground. The officers of the pope raised him, and, when he was on his legs, he looked wildly around for his sword, which, falling from his hand, had been kicked among the crowd, and seeing it not, he said, between his ground teeth, to Cecco del Vecchio—

“Fellow, thy neck shall answer this outrage, or may God desert me!” and passed along through the space, while a half-suppressed and exultant hoot from the bystanders followed his path.

“Way there!” cried the smith, “for the Lord Martino di Porto, and may all the people know that he has threatened to take my life for the discharge of my duty in obedience to the pope’s vicar!”

“He dare not,” shouted out a thousand voices ;
“the people can protect their own !”

This scene had not been lost on the Provençal, who well knew how to construe the wind by the direction of straws, and saw at once, by the boldness of the populace, that they themselves were conscious of a coming tempest. “*Par Dieu,*” said he, as he saluted Adrian, who, gravely, and without looking behind, had now won the steps of the church, “yon tall fellow has a brave heart, and many friends, too. What think you ?” he added, in a low whisper ; “is not this scene a proof that the nobles are less safe than they wot of ?”

“The beast begins to kick against the spur, sir knight,” answered Adrian ; “a wise horseman should, in such a case, take care how he pull the rein too tight, lest the beast should rear, and he be overthrown—yet that is the policy thou wouldst recommend.”

“You mistake,” returned Montreal ; “my wish was to give Rome one sovereign instead of many tyrants,—but hark ! what means that bell ?”

“The ceremony is about to begin,” answered Adrian.
“Shall we enter the church together ?”

Seldom had a temple consecrated to God witnessed so singular a spectacle as that which now animated the solemn space of the Lateran.

In the centre of the church, seats were raised in an amphitheatre, at the far end of which was a scaffolding, a little higher than the rest ; below this spot, but high enough to be in sight of all the concourse, was placed a vast table of iron, on which was graven an ancient

inscription, and bearing in its centre a clear and prominent device, presently to be explained.

The seats were covered with cloth and rich tapestry. In the rear of the church was drawn a purple curtain. Around the amphitheatre were the officers of the church, in the party-coloured liveries of the pope. To the right of the scaffold sate Raimond, Bishop of Orvieto, in his robes of state. On the benches round him you saw all the marked personages of Rome—the judges, the men of letters, the nobles, from the lofty rank of the Savelli to the inferior grade of a Raselli. The space beyond the amphitheatre was filled with the people, who now poured fast in, stream after stream: all the while rang, clear and loud, the great bell of the church.

At length, as Adrian and Montreal seated themselves at a little distance from Raimond, the bell suddenly ceased—the murmurs of the people were stilled—the purple curtain was withdrawn, and Rienzi came forth with slow and majestic steps. He came—but not in his usual sombre and plain attire. Over his broad breast he wore a vest of dazzling whiteness—a long robe, in the ample fashion of the toga, descended to his feet and swept the floor. On his head he wore a fold of white cloth, in the centre of which shone a golden crown. But the crown was divided, or cloven, as it were, by the mystic ornament of a silver sword, which, attracting the universal attention, testified at once that this strange garb was worn, not from the vanity of display, but for the sake of presenting to the concourse—in the person of the citizen—a type and

emblem of that state of the city on which he was about to descant.

“Faith,” whispered one of the old nobles to his neighbour, “the plebeian assumes it bravely.”

“It will be a rare sport,” said a second. “I trust the good man will put some jests in his discourse.”

“What showman’s tricks are these?” said a third.

“He is certainly crazed!” said a fourth.

“How handsome he is!” said the women, mixed with the populace.

“This is a man who has learned the people by heart,” observed Montreal to Adrian. “He knows he must speak to the eye, in order to win the mind: a knave,—a wise knave!”

And now Rienzi had ascended the scaffold; and as he looked long and steadfastly around the meeting, the high and thoughtful repose of his majestic countenance, its deep and solemn gravity, hushed all the murmurs, and made its effect equally felt by the sneering nobles as the impatient populace.

“Signors of Rome,” said he, at length, “and ye, friends and citizens, you have heard why we are met together this day: and you, my Lord Bishop of Orvietto,—and ye, fellow-labourers with me in the field of letters,—ye, too, are aware that it is upon some matter relative to that ancient Rome, the rise and the decline of whose past power and glories we have spent our youth in endeavouring to comprehend. But this, believe me, is no vain enigma of erudition, useful but to the studious,—referring but to the dead. Let the past perish!

—Let darkness shroud it!—let it sleep for ever over the crumbling temples and desolate tombs of its forgotten sons,—if it cannot afford us, from its disburied secrets, a guide for the present and the future. What, my lords, ye have thought that it was for the sake of antiquity alone that we have wasted our nights and days in studying what antiquity can teach us! You are mistaken; it is nothing to know what we have been, unless it is with the desire of knowing that which we ought to be. Our ancestors are mere dust and ashes, save when they speak to our posterity; and then their voices resound, not from the earth below, but the heaven above. There is an eloquence in memory, because it is the nurse of hope. There is a sanctity in the past, but only because of the chronicles it retains,—chronicles of the progress of mankind,—stepping-stones in civilisation, in liberty, and in knowledge. Our fathers forbid us to recede; they teach us what is our rightful heritage, they bid us reclaim, they bid us augment, that heritage,—preserve their virtues, and avoid their errors. These are the true uses of the past. Like the sacred edifice in which we are, it is a tomb upon which to rear a temple. I see that you marvel at this long beginning; ye look to each other—ye ask to what it tends. Behold this broad plate of iron; upon it is graven an inscription but lately disinterred from the heaps of stone and ruin, which—O shame to Rome!—were once the palaces of empire, and the arches of triumphant power. The device in the centre of the table, which you behold, conveys the act of the Roman

Senators, who are conferring upon Vespasian the imperial authority. It is this inscription which I have invited you to hear read ! It specifies the very terms and limits of the authority thus conferred. To the emperor was confided the power of making laws and alliances with whatsoever nation,—of increasing or of diminishing the limits of towns and districts,—of—mark this, my lords !—exalting men to the rank of dukes and kings,—ay, and of deposing and degrading them ;—of making cities, and of unmaking ; in short, of all the attributes of imperial power. Yes, to that emperor was confided this vast authority ; but, by whom ? Heed, listen, I pray you—let not a word be lost ;—by whom, I say ? By the Roman Senate ! What was the Roman Senate ? The representative of the Roman people !”

“ I knew he would come to that !” said the smith, who stood at the door with his fellows, but to whose ear, clear and distinct, rolled the silver voice of Rienzi.

“ Brave fellow ! and this, too, in the hearing of the lords !”

“ Ay, you see what the people were ! and we should never have known this but for him.”

“ Peace, fellows !” said the officer to those of the crowd from whom came these whispered sentences.

Rienzi continued,—“ Yes, it is the people who intrusted this power—to the people, therefore, it belongs ! Did the haughty emperor arrogate the crown ? Could he assume the authority of himself ? Was it born

with him? Did he derive it, my lord barons, from the possession of towered castles—of lofty lineage? No! all-powerful as he was, he had no right to one atom of that power, save from the voice and trust of the Roman people. Such, O my countrymen! such was, even at that day, when liberty was but the shadow of her former self,—such was the acknowledged prerogative of your fathers! All power was the gift of the people. What have ye to give now? Who, who, I say,—what single person, what petty chief, asks *you* for the authority he assumes? His senate is his sword; his chart of licence is written, not with ink, but blood. The people!—there is *no* people! Oh! would to God that we might disentomb the spirit of the past as easily as her records!”

“If I were your kinsman,” whispered Montreal to Adrian, “I would give this man short breathing-time between his peroration and confession.”

“What is your emperor?” continued Reinzi; “a stranger! What the great head of your Church?—an exile! Ye are without your lawful chiefs; and why? Because ye are *not* without your law-defying tyrants! The licence of your nobles, their discords, their dissensions, have driven our holy father from the heritage of St Peter;—they have bathed your streets in your own blood; they have wasted the wealth of your labours on private quarrels and the maintenance of hireling ruffians! Your forces are exhausted against yourselves. You have made a mockery of your country, once the mistress of the world. You have steeped her

lips in gall—ye have set a crown of thorns upon her head! What, my lords!” cried he, turning sharply round towards the Savelli and Orsini, who, endeavouring to shake off the thrill which the fiery eloquence of Rienzi had stricken to their hearts, now, by contemptuous gestures and scornful smiles, testified the displeasure they did not dare loudly to utter in the presence of the vicar and the people. “What! even while I speak—not the sanctity of this place restrains you! I am an humble man—a citizen of Rome;—but I have this distinction; I have raised against myself many foes and scoffers for that which I have done for Rome. I am hated, because I love my country; I am despised, because I would exalt her. I retaliate—I shall be avenged. Three traitors in your own palaces shall betray you: their names are—Luxury, Envy, and Dissension!”

“There he had them on the hip!”

“Ha, ha! by the Holy Cross, that was good!”

“I would go to the hangman for such another keen stroke as that!”

“It is a shame if *we* are cowards, when one man is thus brave,” said the smith.

“This is the man we have always wanted!”

“Silence!” proclaimed the officer.

“O Romans!” resumed Rienzi, passionately—
“awake! I conjure you. Let this memorial of your former power, your ancient liberties, sink deep into your souls. In a propitious hour, if ye seize it; in an evil one, if ye suffer the golden opportunity to escape,

has this record of the past been unfolded to your eyes. Recollect that the Jubilee approaches."

The Bishop of Orvietto smiled, and bowed approvingly; the people, the citizens, the inferior nobles, noted well those signs of encouragement; and, to their minds, the pope himself, in the person of his vicar looked benignly on the daring of Rienzi.

"The Jubilee approaches; the eyes of all Christendom will be directed hither. Here, where from all quarters of the globe men come for peace, shall they find discord? seeking absolution, shall they perceive but crime? In the centre of God's dominion, shall they weep at your weakness? in the seat of the martyred saints, shall they shudder at your vices?—in the fountain and source of Christ's law, shall they find all law unknown? You were the glory of the world—will you be its byword? You were its example—will you be its warning? Rise, while it is yet time!—clear your roads from the bandits that infest them!—your walls from the hirelings that they harbour! Banish these civil discords, or the men—how proud, how great soever—who maintain them! Pluck the scales from the hand of Fraud!—the sword from the hand of Violence!—the balance and the sword are the ancient attributes of Justice!—restore them to *her* again! This be your high task—these be your great ends! Deem any man who opposes them a traitor to his country. Gain a victory greater than those of the Cæsars—a victory over yourselves. Let the pilgrims of the world behold the resurrection of Rome! Make

one epoch of the Jubilee of Religion and the Restoration of Law ! Lay the sacrifice of your vanquished passions—the first-fruits of your renovated liberties—upon the very altar that these walls contain ! and never ! oh, never ! since the world began, shall men have made a more grateful offering to their God.”

So intense was the sensation these words created in the audience—so breathless and overpowered did they leave the souls which they took by storm—that Rienzi had descended the scaffold, and already disappeared behind the curtain from which he had emerged, ere the crowd were fully aware that he had ceased.

The singularity of this sudden apparition—robed in mysterious splendour, and vanishing the moment its errand was fulfilled—gave additional effect to the words it had uttered. The whole character of that bold address became invested with a something preternatural and inspired ; to the minds of the vulgar, the mortal was converted into the oracle ; and, marvelling at the unhesitating courage with which their idol had rebuked and conjured the haughty barons,—each of whom they regarded in the light of sanctioned executioners, whose anger could be made manifest at once, by the gibbet or the axe,—the people could not but superstitiously imagine that nothing less than authority from above could have gifted their leader with such hardihood, and preserved him from the danger it incurred. In fact, it was in this very courage of Rienzi that his safety consisted ; he was placed in those circumstances where audacity is prudence. Had

he been less bold, the nobles would have been more severe; but so great a licence of speech in an officer of the Holy See, they naturally imagined, was not unauthorised by the assent of the pope, as well as by the approbation of the people. Those who did not (like Stephen Colonna) despise words as wind, shrank back from the task of punishing one whose voice might be the mere echo of the wishes of the pontiff. The dissensions of the nobles among each other were no less favourable to Rienzi. He attacked a body, the members of which had no union.

“It is not *my* duty to slay him!” said one.

“I am not the representative of the barons!” said another.

“If Stephen Colonna heeds him not, it would be absurd, as well as dangerous, in a meaner man to make himself the champion of the order!” said a third.

The Colonna smiled approval when Rienzi denounced an Orsini—an Orsini laughed aloud when the eloquence burst over a Colonna. The lesser nobles were well pleased to hear attacks upon both; while, on the other hand, the bishop, by the long impunity of Rienzi, had taken courage to sanction the conduct of his fellow-officer. He affected, indeed, at times, to blame the excess of his fervour, but it was always accompanied by the praises of his honesty; and the approbation of the pope’s vicar confirmed the impression of the nobles as to the approbation of the pope. Thus, from the very rashness of his enthusiasm had grown his security and success.

Still, however, when the barons had a little recovered from the stupor into which Rienzi had cast them, they looked round to each other; and their looks confessed their sense of the insolence of the orator, and the affront offered to themselves.

“*Per fede!*” quoth Reginaldo di Orsini, “this is past bearing,—the plebeian has gone too far!”

“Look at the populace below! how they murmur and gape—and how their eyes sparkle—and what looks they bend at us!” said Luca di Savelli to his mortal enemy, Castruccio Malatesta. The sense of a common danger united in one moment, but only *for* a moment, the enmity of years.

“Diavolo!” muttered Raselli (Nina’s father) to a baron equally poor; “but the clerk has truth in his lips. ’Tis a pity he is not noble.”

“What a clever brain marred!” said a Florentine merchant. “That man might be something, if he were sufficiently rich.”

Adrian and Montreal were silent; the first seemed lost in thought, the last was watching the various effects produced upon the audience.

“Silence!” proclaimed the officers. “Silence, for my lord vicar.”

At this announcement, every eye turned to Raimond, who, rising with much clerical importance, thus addressed the assembly:—

“Although, barons and citizens of Rome, my well-beloved flock and children, I, no more than yourselves, anticipated the exact nature of the address ye have

just heard,—and, albeit, I cannot feel unalloyed contentment at the manner, nor, I may say, at the whole matter of that fervent exhortation—*yet* [laying great emphasis on the last word] I cannot suffer you to depart without adding to the prayers of our holy father's servant, those also of his holiness's spiritual representative. It is true! the Jubilee approaches—the Jubilee approaches—and yet our roads, even to the gates of Rome, are infested with murderous and godless ruffians! What pilgrim can venture across the Apennines to worship at the altars of St Peter? The Jubilee approaches: what scandal shall it be to Rome if these shrines be without pilgrims—if the timid recoil from, if the bold fall victims to, the dangers of the way! Wherefore, I pray you all, citizens and chiefs alike,—I pray you all to lay aside those unhappy dissensions which have so long consumed the strength of our sacred city; and, uniting with each other in the ties of amity and brotherhood, to form a blessed league against the marauders of the road. I see amongst you, my lords, many of the boasts and pillars of the state; but, alas! I think with grief and dismay on the causeless and idle hatred that has grown up between you!—a scandal to our city, and reflecting, let me add, my lords, no honour on your faith as Christians, nor on your dignity as defenders of the Church.”

Among the inferior nobles—along the seats of the judges and the men of letters—through the vast concourse of the people—ran a loud murmur of approbation at these words. The greater barons looked proudly,

but not contemptuously, at the countenance of the prelate, and preserved a strict and unrevealing silence.

“In this holy spot,” continued the bishop, “let me beseech you to bury those fruitless animosities which have already cost enough of blood and treasure; and let us quit these walls with one common determination to evince our courage and display our chivalry only against our universal foes;—those ruffians who lay waste our fields, and infest our public ways,—the foes alike of the people we should protect, and the God whom we should serve!”

The bishop resumed his seat; the nobles looked at each other without reply; the people began to whisper loudly among themselves; when, after a short pause, Adrian di Castello rose.

“Pardon me, my lords, and you, reverend father, if I, inexperienced in years and of little mark and dignity amongst you, presume to be the first to embrace the proposal we have just heard. Willingly do I renounce all ancient cause of enmity with any of my compeers. Fortunately for me, my long absence from Rome has swept from my remembrance the feuds and rivalries familiar to my early youth; and in this noble conclave I see but one man [glancing at Martino di Porto, who sat sullenly looking down] against whom I have, at any time, deemed it a duty to draw my sword; the gage that I once cast to that noble is yet, I rejoice to think, unredeemed. I withdraw it. Henceforth my only foes shall be the foes of Rome!”

“Nobly spoken!” said the bishop, aloud.

“And,” continued Adrian, casting down his glove amongst the nobles, “I throw, my lords, the gage, thus resumed, amongst you all, in challenge to a wider rivalry, and a more noble field. I invite any man to vie with me in the zeal that he shall show to restore tranquillity to our roads, and order to our state. It is a contest in which, if I be vanquished with reluctance, I will yield the prize without envy. In ten days from this time, reverend father, I will raise forty horsemen-at-arms, ready to obey whatever orders shall be agreed upon for the security of the Roman state. And you, O Romans, dismiss, I pray you, from your minds, those eloquent invectives against your fellow-citizens which ye have lately heard. All of us, of what rank soever, may have shared in the excesses of these unhappy times; let us endeavour, not to avenge nor to imitate, but to reform and to unite. And may the people hereafter find that the true boast of a patrician is, that his power the better enables him to serve his country.”

“Brave words!” quoth the smith, sneeringly.

“If they were all like him!” said the smith’s neighbour.

“He has helped the nobles out of a dilemma,” said Pandulfo.

“He has shown grey wit under young hairs,” said an aged Malatesta.

“You have turned the tide, but not stemmed it, noble Adrian,” whispered the ever-boding Montreal, as amidst the murmurs of the general approbation the young Colonna resumed his seat.

“How mean you?” said Adrian.

“That your soft words, like all patrician conciliations, have come too late.”

Not another noble stirred, though they felt, perhaps, disposed to join in the general feeling of amnesty, and appeared by signs and whispers to applaud the speech of Adrian. They were too habituated to the ungracefulness of an unlettered pride, to bow themselves to address conciliating language either to the people or their foes. And Raimond, glancing round, and not willing that their unseemly silence should be long remarked, rose at once, to give it the best construction in his power.

“My son, thou hast spoken as a patriot and a Christian: by the approving silence of your peers we all feel that they share your sentiments. Break we up the meeting—its end is obtained. The manner of our proceeding against the leagued robbers of the road requires maturer consideration elsewhere. This day shall be an epoch in our history.”

“It shall,” quoth Cecco del Vecchio, gruffly between his teeth.

“Children, my blessing upon you all,” concluded the vicar, spreading his arms.

And in a few minutes more the crowd poured from the church. The different servitors and flag-bearers ranged themselves on the steps without, each train anxious for their master's precedence; and the nobles, gravely collecting in small knots, in the which was no mixture of rival blood, followed the crowd down the

aisles. Soon rose again the din, and the noise, and the wrangling, and the oaths, of the hostile bands, as, with pain and labour, the vicar's officers marshalled them in "order most disorderly."

But so true were Montreal's words to Adrian, that the populace already half forgot the young noble's generous appeal, and were only bitterly commenting on the ungracious silence of his brother lords. What, too, to them was this crusade against the robbers of the road? They blamed the good bishop for not saying boldly to the nobles—"Ye are the first robbers we must march against!" The popular discontents had gone far beyond palliatives; they had arrived at that point when the people longed less for reform than change. There are times when a revolution cannot be warded off; it must come—come alike by resistance or by concession. Woe to that race in which a revolution produces no fruits!—in which the thunderbolt smites the high place, but does not purify the air! To suffer in vain is often the lot of the noblest individuals; but when a people suffer in vain, let them curse themselves!

CHAPTER IV.

The Ambitious Citizen, and the Ambitious Soldier.

THE Bishop of Orvietto lingered last, to confer with Rienzi, who awaited him in the recesses of the Lateran. Raimond had the penetration not to be seduced into believing that the late scene could effect any reformation amongst the nobles, heal their divisions, or lead them actively against the infestors of the Campagna. But as he detailed to Rienzi all that had occurred subsequent to the departure of that hero of the scene, he concluded with saying :—

“ You will perceive from this, one good result will be produced : the first armed dissension—the first fray among the nobles—will seem like a breach of promise ; and, to the people and to the pope, a reasonable excuse for despairing of all amendment amongst the barons,—an excuse which will sanction the efforts of the first, and the approval of the last.”

“ For such a fray we shall not long wait,” answered Rienzi.

“ I believe the prophecy,” answered Raimond, smiling ; “ at present all runs well. Go you with us homeward ? ”

“Nay, I think it better to tarry here till the crowd is entirely dispersed; for if they were to see me, in their present excitement, they might insist on some rash and hasty enterprise. Besides, my lord,” added Rienzi, “with an ignorant people, however honest and enthusiastic, the rule must be rigidly observed—stale not your presence by custom. Never may men like me, who have no external rank, appear amongst the crowd, save on those occasions when the mind is itself a rank.”

“That is true, as you have no train,” answered Raimond, thinking of his own well-liveried menials. “Adieu, then; we shall meet soon.”

“Ay, at Philippi, my lord. Reverend father, your blessing!”

It was some time subsequent to this conference that Rienzi quitted the sacred edifice. As he stood on the steps of the church—now silent and deserted—the hour that precedes the brief twilight of the South lent its magic to the view. There he beheld the sweeping arches of the mighty Aqueduct extending far along the scene, and backed by the distant and purpled hills. Before—to the right—rose the gate which took its Roman name from the Cœlian Mount, at whose declivity it yet stands. Beyond—from the height of the steps—he saw the villages scattered through the grey Campagna, whitening in the sloped sun; and in the furthest distance the mountain shadows began to darken over the roofs of the ancient Tusculum, and the second

Alban* city, which yet rises, in desolate neglect, above the vanished palaces of Pompey and Domitian.

The Roman stood absorbed and motionless for some moments, gazing on the scene, and inhaling the sweet balm of the mellow air. It was the soft spring-time—the season of flowers, and green leaves, and whispering winds—the pastoral May of Italia's poets : but hushed was the voice of song on the banks of the Tiber—the reeds gave music no more. From the sacred Mount in which Saturn held his home, the Dryad and the Nymph, and Italy's native Sylvan, were gone for ever. Rienzi's original nature—its enthusiasm—its veneration for the past—its love of the beautiful and the great—that very attachment to the graces and pomp which give so florid a character to the harsh realities of life, and which power afterwards too luxuriantly developed ; the exuberance of thoughts and fancies, which poured itself from his lips in so brilliant and inexhaustible a flood—all bespoke those intellectual and imaginative biasses, which, in calmer times, might have raised him in literature to a more indisputable eminence than that to which action can ever lead ; and something of such consciousness crossed his spirit at that moment.

“Happier had it been for me,” thought he, “had I never looked out from my own heart upon the world. I had all within me that makes contentment of the

* The first Alba—the Alba Longa—whose origin fable ascribes to Ascanius, was destroyed by Tullus Hostilius. The second Alba, or modern Albano, was erected on the plain below the ancient town, a little before the time of Nero.

present, because I had that which can make me forget the present. I had the power to repeople—to create: the legends and dreams of old—the divine faculty of verse, in which the beautiful superfluities of the heart can pour themselves—these were mine! Petrarch chose wisely for himself! To address the world, but from without the world; to persuade—to excite—to command,—for these are the aim and glory of ambition;—but to shun its tumult and its toil! His the quiet cell which he fills with the shapes of beauty—the solitude, from which he can banish the evil times whereon we are fallen, but in which he can dream back the great hearts and the glorious epochs of the past. For me—to what cares I am wedded! to what labours I am bound! what instruments I must use! what disguises I must assume! to tricks and artifice I must bow my pride! Base are my enemies—uncertain my friends! and verily, in this struggle with blinded and mean men, the soul itself becomes warped and dwarfish. Patient and darkling, the Means creep through caves and the soiling mire, to gain at last the light which is the End.”

In these reflections there was a truth, the whole gloom and sadness of which the Roman had not yet experienced. However august be the object we propose to ourselves, every less worthy path we take to insure it distorts the mental sight of our ambition; and the means, by degrees, abase the end to their own standard. This is the true misfortune of a man nobler than his age—that the instruments he must use soil

himself: half he reforms his times; but half, too, the times will corrupt the reformer. His own craft undermines his safety;—the people, whom he himself accustoms to a false excitement, perpetually crave it; and when their ruler ceases to seduce their fancy, he falls their victim. The reform he makes by these means is hollow and momentary—it is swept away with himself: it was but the trick—the show—the wasted genius of a conjuror: the curtain falls—the magic is over—the cup and balls are kicked aside. Better one slow step in enlightenment,—which being made by the reason of a whole people, cannot recede,—than these sudden flashes in the depth of the general night, which the darkness, by contrast doubly dark, swallows up everlastingly again!

As, slowly and musingly, Rienzi turned to quit the church, he felt a light touch upon his shoulder.

“Fair evening to you, sir scholar,” said a frank voice.

“To you I return the courtesy,” answered Rienzi, gazing upon the person who thus suddenly accosted him, and in whose white cross and martial bearing the reader recognises the Knight of St John.

“You know me not, I think?” said Montreal: “but that matters little, we may easily commence our acquaintance; for me, indeed, I am fortunate enough to have made myself already acquainted with you.”

“Possibly we have met elsewhere, at the house of one of those nobles to whose rank you seem to belong?”

“Belong! no, not exactly!” returned Montreal proudly. “High-born and great as your magnates

deem themselves, I would not, while the mountains can yield one free spot for my footstep, change my place in the world's many grades for theirs. To the brave there is but one sort of plebeian, and that is the coward. But you, sage Rienzi," continued the knight, in a gayer tone, "I have seen in more stirring scenes than the hall of a Roman baron."

Rienzi glanced keenly at Montreal, who met his eye with an open brow.

"Yes!" resumed the knight—"but let us walk on; suffer me for a few moments to be your companion. Yes! I have listened to you—the other eve, when you addressed the populace, and to-day, when you rebuked the nobles; and at midnight, too, not long since, when (your ear, fair sir!—lower, it is a secret!)—at midnight, too, when you administered the oath of brotherhood to the bold conspirators on the ruined Aventine!"

As he concluded, the knight drew himself aside to watch, upon Rienzi's countenance, the effect which his words might produce.

A slight tremor passed over the frame of the conspirator—for so, unless the conspiracy succeed, would Rienzi be termed, by others than Montreal: he turned abruptly round to confront the knight, and placed his hand involuntarily on his sword, but presently relinquished the grasp.

"Ha!" said the Roman slowly, "if this be true, fall Rome! There is treason even among the free!"

"No treason, brave sir!" answered Montreal; "I possess thy secret—but none have betrayed it to me."

“And is it as friend or foe that thou hast learned it?”

“That as it may be,” returned Montreal, carelessly. “Enough, at present, that I could send thee to gibbet, if I said but the word—to show my power to be thy foe; enough, that I have not done it, to prove my disposition to be thy friend.”

“Thou mistakest, stranger! that man does not live who could shed my blood in the streets of Rome! The gibbet! Little dost thou know of the power which surrounds Rienzi.”

These words were said with some scorn and bitterness; but, after a moment's pause, Rienzi resumed, more calmly:—

“By the cross on thy mantle, thou belongest to one of the proudest orders of knighthood: thou art a foreigner, and a cavalier. What generous sympathies can convert thee into a friend of the Roman people?”

“Cola di Rienzi,” returned Montreal, “the sympathies that unite us are those which unite all men who, by their own efforts, rise above the herd. True, I was born noble—but powerless and poor; at my beck now move, from city to city, the armed instruments of authority: my breath is the law of thousands. This empire I have not inherited; I won it by a cool brain and a fearless arm. Know me for Walter de Montreal; is it not a name that speaks a spirit kindred to thine own? Is not ambition a common sentiment between us? I do not marshal soldiers for gain only, though

men have termed me avaricious—nor butcher peasants for the love of blood, though men have called me cruel. Arms and wealth are the sinews of power; it is power that I desire;—thou, bold Rienzi, strugglest thou not for the same? Is it the rank breath of the garlic-chewing mob—is it the whispered envy of schoolmen—is it the hollow mouthing of boys who call thee patriot and freeman, words to trick the ear—that will content thee? These are but *thy* instruments to *power*. Have I spoken truly?”

Whatever distaste Rienzi might conceive at this speech, he masked effectually. “Certes,” said he, “it would be in vain, renowned captain, to deny that I seek but that power of which thou speakest. But what union can there be between the ambition of a Roman citizen and the leader of paid armies that take their cause only according to their hire—to-day, fight for liberty in Florence—to-morrow, for tyranny in Bologna? Pardon my frankness; for in this age that is deemed no disgrace which I impute to thy armies. Valour and generalship are held to consecrate any cause they distinguish; and he who is the master of princes, may be well honoured by them as their equal.”

“We are entering into a less deserted quarter of the town,” said the knight; “is there no secret place—no Aventine—in this direction, where we can confer?”

“Hush!” replied Rienzi, cautiously looking round. “I thank thee, noble Montreal, for the hint; nor may it be well for us to be seen together. Wilt thou deign

to follow me to my home, by the Palatine Bridge? * there we can converse undisturbed and secure."

"Be it so," said Montreal, falling back.

With a quick and hurried step, Rienzi passed through the town, in which, wherever he was discovered, the scattered citizens saluted him with marked respect; and, turning through a labyrinth of dark alleys, as if to shun the more public thoroughfares, arrived at length at a broad space near the river. The first stars of night shone down on the ancient Temple of Fortuna Virilis, which the chances of Time had already converted into the Church of St Mary of Egypt; and facing the twice-hallowed edifice stood the house of Rienzi.

"It is a fair omen to have my mansion facing the ancient Temple of Fortune," said Rienzi, smiling, as Montreal followed the Roman into the chamber I have already described.

"Yet Valour need never pray to Fortune," said the knight; "the first commands the last."

Long was the conference between these two men, the most enterprising of their age. Meanwhile let me make the reader somewhat better acquainted with the character and designs of Montreal than the hurry of events has yet permitted him to become.

* The picturesque ruins shown at this day as having once been the habitation of the celebrated Cola di Renzi, were long asserted by the antiquarians to have belonged to another Cola or Nicola. I believe, however, that the dispute has been lately decided; and, indeed, no one but an antiquary, and that a Roman one, could suppose that there were two Colas to whom the inscription on the house would apply.

Walter de Montreal, generally known in the chronicles of Italy by the designation of Fra Moreale, had passed into Italy—a bold adventurer, worthy to become a successor of those roving Normans (from one of the most eminent of whom, by the mother's side, he claimed descent) who had formerly played so strange a part in the chivalric errantry of Europe—realising the fable of Amadis and Palmerin—(each knight in himself a host), winning territories and oversetting thrones; acknowledging no laws save those of knighthood; never confounding themselves with the tribe amongst which they settled; incapable of becoming citizens, and scarcely contented with aspiring to be kings. At that time Italy was the India of all those well-born and penniless adventurers who, like Montreal, had inflamed their imagination by the ballads and legends of the Roberts and the Godfreys of old; who had trained themselves from youth to manage the barb, and bear, through the heats of summer, the weight of arms; and who, passing into an effeminate and distracted land, had only to exhibit bravery in order to command wealth. It was considered no disgrace for some powerful chieftain to collect together a band of these hardy aliens—to subsist amidst the mountains on booty and pillage—to make war upon tyrant or republic, as interest suggested, and to sell, at enormous stipends, the immunities of peace. Sometimes they hired themselves to one state to protect it against the other; and the next year beheld them in the field against their former employers. These bands of Northern stipendiaries assumed, therefore, a

civil, as well as a military, importance : they were as indispensable to the safety of one state as they were destructive to the security of all. But five years before the present date, the Florentine Republic had hired the services of a celebrated leader of these foreign soldiers — Gualtier, Duke of Athens. By acclamation, the people themselves had elected that warrior to the state of prince, or tyrant, of their state ; before the year was completed, they revolted against his cruelties, or rather against his exactions—for, despite all the boasts of their historians, they felt an attack on their purses more deeply than an assault on their liberties—they had chased him from their city, and once more proclaimed themselves a Republic. The bravest, and most favoured of the soldiers of the Duke of Athens had been Walter de Montreal ; he had shared the rise and the downfall of his chief. Amongst popular commotions, the acute and observant mind of the Knight of St John had learned no mean civil experience ; he had learned to sound a people—to know how far they would endure—to construe the signs of revolution—to be a reader of the times. After the downfall of the Duke of Athens, as a Free Companion, in other words a Freebooter, Montreal had augmented under the fierce Werner his riches and his renown. At present without employment worthy his spirit of enterprise and intrigue, the disordered and chiefless state of Rome had attracted him thither. In the league he had proposed to Colonna—in the suggestions he had made to the vanity of that signor—his own object was to render his services indispensable—to constitute himself

the head of the soldiery whom his proposed designs would render necessary to the ambition of the Colonna, could it be excited—and, in the vastness of his hardy genius for enterprise, he probably foresaw that the command of such a force would be, in reality, the command of Rome ;—a counter-revolution might easily unseat the Colonna and elect himself to the principality. It had sometimes been the custom of Roman, as of other Italian states, to prefer for a chief magistrate, under the title of *Podesta*, a foreigner to a native. And Montreal hoped that he might possibly become to Rome what the Duke of Athens had been to Florence—an ambition he knew well enough to be above the gentleman of Provence, but not above the leader of an army. But, as we have already seen, his sagacity perceived at once that he could not move the aged head of the patricians to those hardy and perilous measures which were necessary to the attainment of supreme power. Contented with his present station, and taught moderation by his age and his past reverses, Stephen Colonna was not the man to risk a scaffold from the hope to gain a throne. The contempt which the old patrician professed for the people and their idol, also taught the deep-thinking Montreal that, if the Colonna possessed not the ambition, neither did he possess the policy, requisite for empire. The knight found his caution against Rienzi in vain, and he turned to Rienzi himself. Little cared the Knight of St John which party were uppermost—prince or people—so that his own objects were attained ; in fact, he had studied the humours of a people, not in

order to serve, but to rule them ; and, believing all men actuated by a similar ambition, he imagined that, whether a demagogue or a patrician reigned, the people were equally to be victims, and that the cry of "Order" on the one hand, or of "Liberty" on the other, was but the mere pretext by which the energy of one man sought to justify his ambition over the herd. Deeming himself one of the most honourable spirits of his age, he believed in no honour which *he* was unable to feel ; and, sceptic in virtue, was therefore credulous of vice.

But the boldness of his own nature inclined him, perhaps, rather to the adventurous Rienzi than to the self-complacent Colonna ; and he considered that to the safety of the first he and his armed minions might be even more necessary than to that of the last. At present his main object was to learn from Rienzi the exact strength which he possessed, and how far he was prepared for any actual revolt.

The acute Roman took care, on the one hand, how he betrayed to the knight more than he yet knew, or he disgusted him by apparent reserve on the other. Crafty as Montreal was, he possessed not that wonderful art of mastering others which was so pre-eminently the gift of the eloquent and profound Rienzi, and the difference between the grades of their intellect was visible in their present conference.

"I see," said Rienzi, "that amidst all the events which have lately smiled upon my ambition, none is so favourable as that which assures me of your coun-

tenance and friendship. In truth, I require some armed alliance. Would you believe it, our friends, so bold in private meetings, yet shrink from a public explosion. They fear not the patricians, but the soldiery of the patricians ; for it is the remarkable feature of the Italian courage, that they have no terror for each other, but the casque and sword of a foreign hireling make them quail like deer."

"They will welcome gladly, then, the assurance that such hirelings shall be in their service—not against them ; and as many as you desire for the revolution, so many shall you receive."

"But the pay and the conditions," said Rienzi, with his dry sarcastic smile. "How shall we arrange the first, and what shall we hold to be the second ?"

"That is an affair easily concluded," replied Montreal. "For me, to tell you frankly, the glory and excitement of so great a revulsion would alone suffice. I like to feel myself necessary to the completion of high events. For my men it is otherwise. Your first act will be to seize the revenues of the state. Well, whatever they amount to, the product of the first year, great or small, shall be divided amongst us. You the one half, I and my men the other half."

"It is much," said Rienzi, gravely, and as if in calculation,—“but Rome cannot purchase her liberties too dearly. So be it then decided."

"Amen !—and now, then, what is your force ? for these eighty or a hundred signors of the Aventine,—worthy men, doubtless,—scarce suffice for a revolt !"

Gazing cautiously round the room, the Roman placed his hand on Montreal's arm—

“Between you and me, it requires time to cement it. We shall be unable to stir these five weeks. I have too rashly anticipated the period. The corn is indeed cut, but I must now, by private adjuration and address, bind up the scattered sheaves.”

“Five weeks,” repeated Montreal; “that is far longer than I anticipated.”

“What I desire,” continued Rienzi, fixing his searching eyes upon Montreal, “is that, in the meanwhile, we should preserve a profound calm—we should remove every suspicion. I shall bury myself in my studies, and convoke no more meetings.”

“Well——”

“And for yourself, noble knight, might I venture to dictate, I would pray you to mix with the nobles—to profess for me and for the people the profoundest contempt—and to contribute to rock them yet more in the cradle of their false security. Meanwhile you could quietly withdraw as many of the armed mercenaries as you influence from Rome, and leave the nobles without their only defenders. Collecting these hardy warriors in the recesses of the mountains, a day's march from hence, we may be able to summon them at need, and they shall appear at our gates, and in the midst of our rising—hailed as deliverers by the nobles, but in reality allies with the people. In the confusion and despair of our enemies at discovering their mistake, they will fly from the city.”

“And its revenues and its empire will become the appanage of the hardy soldier and the intriguing demagogue !” cried Montreal, with a laugh.

“Sir knight, the division shall be equal.”

“Agreed !”

“And now, noble Montreal, a flask of our best vintage !” said Rienzi, changing his tone.

“You know the Provençals,” answered Montreal, gaily.

The wine was brought, the conversation became free and familiar, and Montreal, whose craft was acquired, and whose frankness was natural, unwittingly committed his secret projects and ambition more nakedly to Rienzi than he had designed to do. They parted apparently the best of friends.

“By the way,” said Rienzi, as they drained the last goblet, “Stephen Colonna betakes him to Corneto, with a convoy of corn on the 19th. Will it not be as well if you join him ? You can take that opportunity to whisper discontent to the mercenaries that accompany him on his mission, and induce them to our plan.”

“I thought of that before,” returned Montreal ; “it shall be done. For the present, farewell !

“ ‘ His barb, and his sword,
And his lady the peerless,
Are all that are prized
By Orlando the fearless.

Success to the Norman,
The darling of story ;
His glory is pleasure—
His pleasure is glory.’ ”

Chanting this rude ditty as he resumed his mantle, the knight waved his hand to Rienzi, and departed.

Rienzi watched the receding form of his guest with an expression of hate and fear upon his countenance. "Give that man the power," he muttered, "and he may be a second Totila.* Methinks I see, in his gripping and ferocious nature—through all the gloss of its gaiety and knightly grace—the very personification of our old Gothic foes. I trust I have lulled him! Verily, two suns could no more blaze in one atmosphere, than Walter de Montreal and Cola di Rienzi live in the same city. The star-seers tell us that we feel a secret and uncontrollable antipathy to those whose astral influences destine them to work us evil; such antipathy do I feel for yon fair-faced homicide. Cross not my path, Montreal!—cross not my path!"

With this soliloquy Rienzi turned within, and retiring to his apartment, was seen no more that night.

* Innocent VI., some years afterwards, proclaimed Montreal to be *worse* than Totila.

CHAPTER V.

The Procession of the Barons.—The Beginning of the End.

It was the morning of the 19th of May, the air was brisk and clear, and the sun, which had just risen, shone cheerily upon the glittering casques and spears of a gallant procession of armed horsemen, sweeping through the long and principal street of Rome. The neighing of the horses, the ringing of the hoofs, the dazzle of the armour, and the tossing to and fro of the standards, adorned with the proud insignia of the Colonna, presented one of the gay and brilliant spectacles peculiar to the Middle Ages.

At the head of the troop, on a stout palfrey, rode Stephen Colonna. At his right was the Knight of Provence, curbing with an easy hand a slight but fiery steed of the Arab race: behind him followed two squires, the one leading his war-horse, the other bearing his lance and helmet. At the left of Stephen Colonna rode Adrian, grave and silent, and replying only by monosyllables to the gay bavardage of the Knight of Provence. A considerable number of the flower of the Roman nobles followed the old baron;

and the train was closed by a serried troop of foreign horsemen, completely armed.

There was no crowd in the street—the citizens looked with seeming apathy at the procession from their half-closed shops.

“Have these Romans no passion for shows?” asked Montreal; “if they could be more easily amused, they would be more easily governed.”

“Oh, Rienzi, and such buffoons, amuse them. We do better, we terrify!” replied Stephen.

“What sings the troubadour, Lord Adrian?” said Montreal.

“Smiles, false smiles, should form the school
For those who rise, and those who rule:
The brave they trick, the fair subdue,
Kings deceive, and States undo.
Smiles, false smiles!

Frowns, true frowns, ourselves betray,
The brave arouse, the fair dismay,
Sting the pride, which blood must heal,
Mix the bowl, and point the steel.
Frowns, true frowns!’

“The lay is of France, signor; yet methinks it brings its wisdom from Italy;—for the serpent smile is your countrymen’s proper distinction, and the frown ill becomes them.”

“Sir knight,” replied Adrian, sharply, and incensed at the taunt; “you foreigners have taught us how to frown:—a virtue sometimes.”

“But not wisdom, unless the hand could maintain what the brow menaced,” returned Montreal, with

haughtiness ; for he had much of the Franc vivacity, which often overcame his prudence ; and he had conceived a secret pique against Adrian since their interview at Stephen's palace.

"Sir knight," answered Adrian, colouring ; "our conversation may lead to warmer words than I would desire to have with one who has rendered me so gallant a service."

"Nay, then, let us go back to the troubadours," said Montreal, indifferently. "Forgive me if I do not think highly, in general, of Italian honour, or Italian valour ; *your* valour I acknowledge, for I have witnessed it, and valour and honour go together,—let that suffice !"

As Adrian was about to answer, his eye fell suddenly on the burly form of Cecco del Vecchio, who was leaning his bare and brawny arms over his anvil, and gazing with a smile upon the group. There was something in that smile which turned the current of Adrian's thoughts, and which he could not contemplate without an unaccountable misgiving.

"A strong villain, that," said Montreal, also eyeing the smith. "I should like to enlist him. Fellow!" cried he, aloud ; "you have an arm that were as fit to wield the sword as to fashion it. Desert your anvil, and follow the fortunes of Fra Moreale !"

The smith nodded his head. "Signor cavalier," said he, gravely, "we poor men have no passion for war ; we want not to kill others—we desire only ourselves to live,—if you will let us !"

“By the Holy Mother, a slavish answer! But you Romans——”

“*Are slaves!*” interrupted the smith, turning away to the interior of his forge.

“The dog is mutinous,” said the old Colonna. And as the band swept on, the rude foreigners, encouraged by their leaders, had each some taunt or jest, uttered in a barbarous attempt at the southern *patois*, for the lazy giant, as he again appeared in front of his forge, leaning on his anvil as before, and betraying no sign of attention to his insultors, save by a heightened glow of his swarthy visage;—and so the gallant procession passed through the streets, and quitted the Eternal City.

There was a long interval of deep silence—of general calm—throughout the whole of Rome: the shops were still but half opened; no man betook himself to his business; it was like the commencement of some holiday, when indolence precedes enjoyment.

About noon, a few small knots of men might be seen scattered about the streets, whispering to each other, but soon dispersing; and every now and then, a single passenger, generally habited in the long robes used by the men of letters, or in the more sombre garb of monks, passed hurriedly up the street towards the church of St Mary of Egypt, once the Temple of Fortune. Then, again, all was solitary and deserted. Suddenly there was heard *the sound of a single trumpet!* It swelled—it gathered on the ear. Cecco del Vecchio looked up from his anvil! *A solitary horse-*

man paced slowly by the forge, and wound a long loud blast of the trumpet suspended round his neck, as he passed through the middle of the street. Then might you see a crowd, suddenly, and as by magic, appear emerging from every corner ; the street became thronged with multitudes ; but it was only by the tramp of their feet, and an indistinct and low murmur, that they broke the silence. Again the horseman wound his trump, and when the note ceased, he cried aloud—"Friends and Romans! to-morrow, at dawn of day let each man find himself unarmed before the church of St Angelo. Cola di Rienzi convenes the Romans to provide for the good state of Rome." A shout, that seemed to shake the bases of the seven hills, broke forth at the end of this brief exhortation ; the horseman rode slowly on, and the crowd followed. This was the commencement of the Revolution!

CHAPTER VI.

The Conspirator becomes the Magistrate.

AT midnight, when the rest of the city seemed hushed in rest, lights were streaming from the windows of the Church of St Angelo. Breaking from its echoing aisles, the long and solemn notes of sacred music stole at frequent intervals upon the air. Rienzi was praying within the church ; thirty masses consumed the hours from night till morn, and all the sanction of religion was invoked to consecrate the enterprise of liberty.* The sun had long risen, and the crowd had long been assembled before the church door, and in vast streams along every street that led to it,—when the bell of the church tolled out long and merrily ; and as it ceased, the voices of the choristers within chanted the following hymn, in which were somewhat strikingly, though barbarously, blended, the spirit of the classic patriotism with the fervour of religious zeal :—

* In fact, I apprehend, that if ever the life of Cola di Rienzi shall be written by a hand worthy of the task, *it will be shown that a strong religious feeling was blended with the political enthusiasm of the people,—the religious feeling of a premature and crude reformation, the legacy of Arnold of Brescia.* It was not, however, one excited against the priests, but favoured by them. The principal conventual orders declared for the revolution.

THE ROMAN HYMN OF LIBERTY.

“Let the mountains exult around ! *
 On her seven-hill'd throne renown'd,
 Once more old Rome is crown'd !
 Jubilate !

Sing out, O Vale and Wave !
 Look up from each laurell'd grave,
 Bright dust of the deathless brave !
 Jubilate !

Pale Vision, what art thou ?—Lo,
 From Time's dark deeps,
 Like a Wind, It sweeps,
 Like a Wind, when the tempests blow :

A shadowy form—as a giant ghost—
 It stands in the midst of the armed host !
 The dead man's shroud on Its awful limbs :
 And the gloom of Its presence the daylight dims :
 And the trembling world looks on aghast—
 All hail to the SOUL OF THE MIGHTY PAST !
 Hail ! all hail !

As we speak—as we hallow—It moves, It breathes ;
 From its clouded crest bud the laurel wreaths—
 As a Sun that leaps up from the arms of Night,
 The shadow takes shape, and the gloom takes light.
 Hail ! all hail !

THE SOUL OF THE PAST, again,
 To its ancient home,
 In the hearts of Rome,
 Hath come to resume its reign !

O Fame, with a prophet's voice,
 Bid the ends of the earth rejoice !

* “Exultent in circuito Vestro Montes,” &c.—Let the mountains exult around ! So begins Rienzi's letter to the Senate and Roman people, preserved by Hocsemius.

Wherever the Proud are Strong,
And Right is oppress'd by Wrong ;—
Wherever the day dim shines
Through the cell where the captive pines ;—
Go forth, with a trumpet's sound !
And tell to the Nations round—
On the Hills which the Heroes trod—
In the shrines of the Saints of God—
In the Cæsars' hall, and the Martyrs' prison—
That the slumber is broke, and the Sleeper arisen !
That the reign of the Goth and the Vandal is o'er ;
And Earth feels the tread of THE ROMAN once more ! ”

As the hymn ended, the gate of the church opened ; the crowd gave way on either side, and, preceded by three of the young nobles of the inferior order, bearing standards of allegorical design, depicting the triumph of liberty, justice, and concord, forth issued Rienzi, clad in complete armour, the helmet alone excepted. His face was pale with watching and intense excitement—but stern, grave, and solemnly composed ; and its expression so repelled any vociferous and vulgar burst of feeling, that those who beheld it hushed the shout on their lips, and stilled, by a simultaneous cry of reproof, the gratulations of the crowd behind. Side by side with Rienzi moved Raimond, Bishop of Orvietto : and behind, marching two by two, followed a hundred men-at-arms. In complete silence the procession began its way, until, as it approached the Capitol, the awe of the crowd gradually vanished, and thousands upon thousands of voices rent the air with shouts of exultation and joy.

Arrived at the foot of the great staircase, which then

made the principal ascent to the square of the Capitol, the procession halted ; and as the crowd filled up that vast space in front—adorned and hallowed by many of the most majestic columns of the temples of old—Rienzi addressed the populace, whom he had suddenly elevated into a people.

He depicted forcibly the servitude and misery of the citizens—the utter absence of all law—the want even of common security to life and property. He declared that, undaunted by the peril he incurred, he devoted his life to the regeneration of their common country ; and he solemnly appealed to the people to assist the enterprise, and at once to sanction and consolidate the revolution by an established code of law and a constitutional assembly. He then ordered the chart and outline of the constitution he proposed, to be read by the herald to the multitude.

It created—or rather revived, with new privileges and powers—a representative assembly of councillors. It proclaimed, as its first law, one that seems simple enough to our happier times, but never hitherto executed at Rome : every wilful homicide, of whatever rank, was to be punished by death. It enacted, that no private noble or citizen should be suffered to maintain fortifications and garrisons in the city or the country ; that the gates and bridges of the state should be under the control of whomsoever should be elected chief magistrate. It forbade all harbour of brigands, mercenaries, and robbers, on payment of a thousand marks of silver ; and it made the barons who possessed

the neighbouring territories responsible for the safety of the roads, and the transport of merchandise. It took under the protection of the state the widow and the orphan. It appointed, in each of the quarters of the city, an armed militia, whom the tolling of the bell of the Capitol, at any hour, was to assemble to the protection of the state. It ordained, that in each harbour of the coast, a vessel should be stationed, for the safeguard of commerce. It decreed the sum of one hundred florins to the heirs of every man who died in the defence of Rome ; and it devoted the public revenues to the service and protection of the state.

Such, moderate at once and effectual, was the outline of the new constitution ; and it may amuse the reader to consider how great must have been the previous disorders of the city, when the common and elementary provisions of civilisation and security made the character of the code proposed, and the limit of a popular revolution.

The most rapturous shouts followed the sketch of the new constitution : and, amidst the clamour, up rose the huge form of Cecco del Vecchio. Despite his condition, he was a man of great importance at the present crisis : his zeal and his courage, and, perhaps, still more his brute passion and stubborn prejudice, had made him popular. The lower order of mechanics looked to him as their head and representative ; out, then, he spake loud and fearlessly—speaking well, because his mind was full of what he had to say.

“ Countrymen and Citizens !—This new constitution

meets with your approbation—so it ought. But what are good laws, if we do not have good men to execute them? Who can execute a law so well as the man who designs it? If you ask me to give you a notion how to make a good shield, and my notion pleases you, would you ask me, or another smith, to make it for you? If you ask another, he may make a good shield, but it would not be the same as that which I should have made, and the description of which contented you. Cola di Rienzi has proposed a code of law that shall be our shield. Who should see that the shield become what he proposes, but Cola di Rienzi? Romans! I suggest that Cola di Rienzi be intrusted by the people with the authority, by whatsoever name he pleases, of carrying the new constitution into effect;—and whatever be the means, we, the people, will bear him harmless.”

“Long life to Rienzi!—long live Cecco del Vecchio! He hath spoken well!—none but the law-maker shall be the governor!”

Such were the acclamations which greeted the ambitious heart of the scholar. The voice of the people invested him with the supreme power. He had created a commonwealth—to become, if he desired it, a despot!

CHAPTER VII.

Looking after the Halter when the Mare is Stolen.

WHILE such were the events at Rome, a servitor of Stephen Colonna was already on his way to Corneto. The astonishment with which the old baron received the intelligence may be easily imagined. He lost not a moment in convening his troop ; and, while in all the bustle of departure, the Knight of St John abruptly entered his presence. His mien had lost its usual frank composure.

“How is this?” said he, hastily ; “a revolt?—Rienzi sovereign of Rome?—can the news be believed?”

“It is too true !” said Colonna, with a bitter smile. “Where shall we hang him on our return?”

“Talk not so wildly, sir baron,” replied Montreal, discourteously ; “Rienzi is stronger than you think for. I know what men are, and you only know what noble-men are ! Where is your kinsman, Adrian?”

“He is here, noble Montreal,” said Stephen, shrugging his shoulders, with a half-disdainful smile at the rebuke, which he thought it more prudent not to resent ; “he is here !—see him enter !”

“You have heard the news ?” exclaimed Montreal.

“I have.”

“And despise the revolution?”

“I fear it!”

“Then you have some sense in you. But this is none of my affair: I will not interrupt your consultations. Adieu for the present!” and ere Stephen could prevent him, the knight had quitted the chamber.

“What means this demagogue?” Montreal muttered to himself. “Would he trick me?—has he got rid of my presence in order to monopolise all the profit of the enterprise? I fear me so!—the cunning Roman! We northern warriors could never compete with the intellect of these Italians, but for their cowardice. But what shall be done? I have already bid Rodolph communicate with the brigands, and they are on the eve of departure from their present lord. Well! let it be so! Better that I should first break the power of the barons, and then make my own terms, sword in hand, with the plebeian. And if I fail in this,—sweet Adeline! I shall see thee again! that is some comfort!—and Louis of Hungary will bid high for the arm and brain of Walter de Montreal. What, ho! Rodolf!” he exclaimed aloud, as the sturdy form of the trooper, half-armed and half-intoxicated, reeled along the courtyard. “Knave! Art thou drunk at this hour?”

“Drunk or sober,” answered Rodolf, bending low, “I am at thy bidding.”

“Well said!—are thy friends ripe for the saddle?”

“Eighty of them, already tired of idleness and the

dull air of Rome, will fly wherever Sir Walter de Montreal wishes."

"Hasten, then,—bid them mount ; we go not hence with the Colonna—we leave while they are yet talking ! Bid my squires attend me !"

And when Stephen Colonna was settling himself on his palfrey, he heard, for the first time, that the Knight of Provence, Rodolf the trooper, and eighty of the stipendiaries, had already departed, — whither, none knew.

"To precede us to Rome ! gallant barbarian !" said Colonna. "Sirs, on !"

CHAPTER VIII.

The Attack—The Retreat—The Election—And the Adhesion.

ARRIVING at Rome, the company of the Colonna found the gates barred, and the walls manned. Stephen bade advance his trumpeters, with one of his captains, imperiously to demand admittance.

“We have orders,” replied the chief of the town-guard, “to admit none who bear arms, flags, or trumpets. Let the Lords Colonna dismiss their train, and they are welcome.”

“Whose are these insolent mandates?” asked the captain.

“Those of the Lord Bishop of Orvietto and Cola di Rienzi, joint protectors of the Buono Stato.”*

The captain of the Colonna returned to his chief with these tidings. The rage of Stephen was indescribable. “Go back,” he cried, as soon as he could summon voice, “and say, that if the gates are not forthwith opened to me and mine, the blood of the plebeians be on their own head. As for Raimond, vicars of the pope have high spiritual authority, none temporal. Let him prescribe a fast, and he shall be

* Good Estate.

obeyed. But, for the rash Rienzi, say that Stephen Colonna will seek him in the Capitol to-morrow, for the purpose of throwing him out of the highest window."

These messages the envoy failed not to deliver.

The captain of the Romans was equally stern in his reply.

"Declare to your lord," said he, "that Rome holds him and his as rebels and traitors; and that the moment you regain your troop, our archers receive our command to draw their bows—in the name of the pope, the city, and the liberator."

This threat was executed to the letter; and ere the old baron had time to draw up his men in the best array, the gates were thrown open, and a well-armed, if undisciplined, multitude poured forth, with fierce shouts, clashing their arms, and advancing the azure banners of the Roman state. So desperate their charge, and so great their numbers, that the barons, after a short and tumultuous conflict, were driven back, and chased by their pursuers for more than a mile from the walls of the city.

As soon as the barons recovered their disorder and dismay, a hasty council was held, at which various and contradictory opinions were loudly urged. Some were for departing on the instant to Palestrina, which belonged to the Colonna, and possessed an almost inaccessible fortress. Others were for dispersing, and entering peaceably, and in detached parties, through the other gates. Stephen Colonna—himself incensed and

disturbed from his usual self-command—was unable to preserve his authority; Luca di Savelli,* a timid, though treacherous and subtle man, already turned his horse's head, and summoned his men to follow him to his castle in Romagna, when the old Colonna bethought himself of a method by which to keep his band from a disunion that he had the sense to perceive would prove fatal to the common cause. He proposed that they should at once repair to Palestrina, and there fortify themselves; while one of the chiefs should be selected to enter Rome alone, and apparently submissive, to examine the strength of Rienzi; and with the discretionary power to resist if possible—or to make the best terms he could for the admission of the rest.

“And who,” asked Savelli, sneeringly, “will undertake this dangerous mission? Who, unarmed and alone, will expose himself to the rage of the fiercest populace of Italy, and the caprice of a demagogue in the first flush of his power?”

The barons and the captains looked at each other in silence. Savelli laughed.

Hitherto Adrian had taken no part in the conference, and but little in the previous contest. He now came to the support of his kinsman.

“Signors!” said he, “I will undertake this mission—but on mine own account, independently of yours;—free to act as I may think best, for the dignity of a Roman noble, and the interests of a Roman citizen;

* The more correct orthography were Luca di Savello, but the one in the text is preserved as more familiar to the English reader.

free to raise my standard on mine own tower, or to yield fealty to the new estate."

"Well said!" cried the old Colonna, hastily. Heaven forbid we should enter Rome as foes, if to enter it as friends be yet allowed us! What say ye, gentles?"

"A more worthy choice could not be selected," said Savelli; "but I should scarce deem it possible that a Colonna could think there was an option between resistance and fealty to this upstart revolution."

"Of that, signor, I will judge for myself; if you demand an agent for yourselves, choose another. I announce to ye frankly, that I have seen enough of other states to think the recent condition of Rome demanded some redress. Whether Rienzi and Raimond be worthy of the task they have assumed, I know not."

Savelli was silent. The old Colonna seized the word.

"To Palestrina, then!—are ye all agreed on this? At the worst, or at the best, we should not be divided! On this condition alone I hazard the safety of my kinsman!"

The barons murmured a little among themselves;—the expediency of Stephen's proposition was evident, and they at length assented to it.

Adrian saw them depart, and then, attended only by his squire, slowly rode towards a more distant entrance into the city. On arriving at the gates, his name was demanded—he gave it freely.

"Enter, my lord," said the warder, "our orders were to admit all that came unarmed and unattended."

But to the Lord Adrian di Castello, alone, we had a special injunction to give the honours due to a citizen and a friend."

Adrian, a little touched by this implied recollection of friendship, now rode through a long line of armed citizens, who saluted him respectfully as he passed, and, as he returned the salutation with courtesy, a loud and approving shout followed his horse's steps.

So, save by one attendant, alone, and in peace, the young patrician proceeded leisurely through the long streets, empty and deserted—for nearly one half of the inhabitants were assembled at the walls, and nearly the other half were engaged in a more peaceful duty,—until, penetrating the interior, the wide and elevated space of the Capitol broke upon his sight. The sun was slowly setting over an immense multitude that overspread the spot, and high above a scaffold raised in the centre, shone to the western ray, the great Gonfalon of Rome studded with silver stars.

Adrian reined in his steed. "This," thought he, "is scarcely the hour thus publicly to confer with Rienzi; yet fain would I, mingled with the crowd, judge how far his power is supported, and in what manner it is borne." Musing a little, he withdrew into one of the obscurer streets, then wholly deserted, surrendered his horse to his squire, and, borrowing of the latter his morion and long mantle, passed to one of the more private entrances of the Capitol, and, enveloped in his cloak, stood—one of the crowd—intent upon all that followed.

“And what,” he asked of a plainly-dressed citizen, “is the cause of this assembly?”

“Heard you not the proclamation?” returned the other in some surprise. “Do you not know that the council of the city and the guilds of the artisans have passed a vote to proffer to Rienzi the title of King of Rome?”

The Knight of the Emperor, to whom belonged that august dignity, drew back in dismay.

“And,” resumed the citizen, “this assembly of all the lesser barons, councillors, and artificers, is convened to hear the answer.”

“Of course it will be assent?”

“I know not—there are strange rumours; hitherto the liberator has concealed his sentiments.”

At that instant a loud flourish of martial music announced the approach of Rienzi. The crowd tumultuously divided, and presently, from the palace of the Capitol to the scaffold, passed Rienzi, still in complete armour, save the helmet, and with him, in all the pomp of his episcopal robes, Raimond of Orvietto.

As soon as Rienzi had ascended the platform, and was thus made visible to the whole concourse, no words can suffice to paint the enthusiasm of the scene—the shouts, the gestures, the tears, the sobs, the wild laughter, in which the sympathy of those lively and susceptible children of the South broke forth. The windows and balconies of the palace were thronged with the wives and daughters of the lesser barons and more opulent citizens; and Adrian, with a slight start,

beheld amongst them — pale, agitated, tearful — the lovely face of his Irene—a face that even thus would have outshone all present, but for one by her side, whose beauty the emotion of the hour only served to embellish. The dark, large, and flashing eyes of Nina di Raselli, just bedewed, were fixed proudly on the hero of her choice : and pride, even more than joy, gave a richer carnation to her cheek, and the presence of a queen to her noble and rounded form. The setting sun poured its full glory over the spot ; the bared heads—the animated faces of the crowd—the grey and vast mass of the Capitol ; and not far from the side of Rienzi, it brought into a strange and startling light the sculptured form of a colossal Lion of Basalt,* which gave its name to a staircase leading to the Capitol. It was an old Egyptian relic — vast, worn, and grim ; some symbol of a vanished creed, to whose face the sculptor had imparted something of the aspect of the human countenance. And this producing the effect probably sought, gave at all times a mystic, preternatural, and fearful expression to the stern features, and to that solemn and hushed repose, which is so peculiarly the secret of Egyptian sculpture. The awe which this colossal and frowning image was calculated

* The existent Capitol is very different from the building at the time of Rienzi ; and the reader must not suppose that the present staircase, designed by Michael Angelo, at the base of which are two marble lions, removed by Pius IV. from the Church of St Stephen del Cacco, was the staircase of the Lion of Basalt, which bears so stern a connection with the history of Rienzi. That mute witness of dark deeds is no more.

to convey, was felt yet more deeply by the vulgar, because "the Staircase of the Lion" was the wonted place of the state executions, as of the state ceremonies. And seldom did the stoutest citizen forget to cross himself, or feel unchilled with a certain terror whenever, passing by the place, he caught, suddenly fixed upon him, the stony gaze and ominous grin of that old monster from the cities of the Nile.

It was some minutes before the feelings of the assembly allowed Rienzi to be heard. But when, at length, the last shout closed with a simultaneous cry of "Long live Rienzi ! Deliverer and King of Rome !" he raised his hand impatiently, and the curiosity of the crowd procured a sudden silence.

"Deliverer of Rome, my countrymen !" said he. "Yes ! change not that title—I am too ambitious to be a king ! Preserve your obedience to your pontiff—your allegiance to your emperor—but be faithful to your own liberties. Ye have a right to your ancient constitution ; but that constitution needed not a king. Emulous of the name of Brutus, I am above the titles of a Tarquin ! Romans, awake ! awake ! be inspired with a nobler love of liberty than that which, if it dethrones the tyrant of to-day, would madly risk the danger of tyranny for to-morrow ! Rome wants still a liberator—never a usurper !—Take away yon bauble !"

There was a pause ; the crowd were deeply affected—but they uttered no shouts ; they looked anxiously for a reply from their councillors, or popular leaders.

"Signor," said Pandulfo di Guido, who was one of

the Caporioni, "your answer is worthy of your fame. But, in order to enforce the law, Rome must endow you with a legal title—if not that of king, deign to accept that of dictator or of consul."

"Long live the Consul Rienzi!" cried several voices. Rienzi waved his hand for silence.

"Pandulfo di Guido! and you, honoured councillors of Rome, such title is at once too august for my merits, and too inapplicable to my functions. I am one of the people—the people are my charge; the nobles can protect themselves. Dictator and consul are the appellations of patricians. No," he continued, after a short pause, "if ye deem it necessary, for the preservation of order, that your fellow-citizen should be intrusted with a formal title and a recognised power, be it so: but let it be such as may attest the nature of our new institutions, the wisdom of the people, and the moderation of their leaders. Once, my countrymen, the people elected, for the protectors of their rights and the guardians of their freedom, certain officers responsible to the people—chosen from the people—provident *for* the people. Their power was great, but it was delegated: a dignity, but a trust. The name of these officers was that of Tribune. Such is the title that, conceded, not by clamour alone, but in the full parliament of the people, and accompanied *by*, such parliament, ruling *with* such parliament,—such is the title I will gratefully accept." *

* Gibbon and Sismondi alike (neither of whom appears to have consulted with much attention the original documents preserved

The speech, the sentiments of Rienzi were rendered far more impressive by a manner of earnest and deep sincerity ; and some of the Romans, despite their corruption, felt a momentary exultation in the forbearance of their chief. “Long live the Tribune of Rome !” was shouted, but less loud than the cry of “Live the King !” And the vulgar almost thought the revolution was incomplete, because the loftier title was not assumed. To a degenerate and embruted people, liberty seems too plain a thing, if unadorned by the pomp of the very despotism they would dethrone. Revenge is their desire, rather than Release ; and the greater the new power they create, the greater seems their revenge against the old. Still all that was most respected, intelligent, and powerful amongst the assembly, were delighted at a temperance which they foresaw would free Rome from a thousand dangers, whether from the emperor or the pontiff. And their delight was yet increased when Rienzi added, so soon as returning silence permitted—“And since we have been equal labourers in the same cause, whatever honours be awarded to me should be extended also to the vicar of the pope, Raimond, lord bishop of Orvietto. Remember that both Church and State are properly the rulers of the people, only because their benefactors.—Long live the first vicar of a pope that was ever also the liberator of a state !”

by Hocsemius) say nothing of the Representative Parliament, which it was almost Rienzi's first public act to institute or model. Six days from the memorable 19th of May, he addressed the people of Viterbo in a letter yet extant. He summons them to elect and send two syndics, or ambassadors, to the General Parliament.

Whether or not Rienzi was only actuated by patriotism in his moderation, certain it is, that his sagacity was at least equal to his virtue ; and perhaps nothing could have cemented the revolution more strongly, than thus obtaining for a colleague the vicar and representative of the pontifical power ; it borrowed, for the time, the sanction of the pope himself—thus made to share the responsibility of the revolution, without monopolising the power of the State.

While the crowd hailed the proposition of Rienzi ; while their shouts yet filled the air ; while Raimond, somewhat taken by surprise, sought by signs and gestures to convey at once his gratitude and his humility, the Tribune-elect, casting his eyes around, perceived many hitherto attracted by curiosity, and whom, from their rank and weight, it was desirable to secure in the first heat of the public enthusiasm. Accordingly, as soon as Raimond had uttered a short and pompous harangue,—in which his eager acceptance of the honour proposed him was ludicrously contrasted by his embarrassed desire not to involve himself or the pope in any untoward consequences that might ensue,—Rienzi motioned to two heralds that stood behind upon the platform, and one of these advancing, proclaimed—“ That as it was desirable that all hitherto neuter should now profess themselves friends or foes, so they were invited to take at once the oath of obedience to the laws, and subscription to the Buono Stato.”

So great was the popular fervour, and so much had it been refined and deepened in its tone by the ad-

dresses of Rienzi, that even the most indifferent had caught the contagion ; and no man liked to be seen shrinking from the rest : so that the most neutral, knowing themselves the most marked, were the most entrapped into allegiance to the Buono Stato. The first who advanced to the platform and took the oath was the Signor di Raselli, the father of Nina.—Others of the lesser nobility followed his example.

The presence of the pope's vicar induced the aristocratic ; the fear of the people urged the selfish ; the encouragement of shouts and gratulations excited the vain. The space between Adrian and Rienzi was made clear. The young noble suddenly felt the eyes of the Tribune were upon him ; he felt that those eyes recognised and called upon him—he coloured—he breathed short. The noble forbearance of Rienzi had touched him to the heart:—the applause—the pageant—the enthusiasm of the scene, intoxicated, confused him.—He lifted his eyes and saw before him the sister of the Tribune—the lady of his love ! His indecision—his pause—continued, when Raimond, observing him, and obedient to a whisper from Rienzi, artfully cried aloud—“ Room for the Lord Adrian di Castello ! a Colonna ! a Colonna ! ” Retreat was cut off. Mechanically, and as if in a dream, Adrian ascended to the platform ; and, to complete the triumph of the Tribune, the sun's last ray beheld the flower of the Colonna—the best and bravest of the Barons of Rome—confessing his authority, and subscribing to his laws !

BOOK III.

THE FREEDOM WITHOUT LAW.

Ben furo avventurosi i cavalieri,
Ch' erano a quella età, che nei valloni,
Nelle scure spelonche e boschi fieri,
Tane di serpi, d' orsi e di leoni,
Trovavan quel che nei palazzi altieri
Appena or trovar pon giudici buoni;
Donne che nella lor più fresca etade
Sien degne di aver titol di beltade.

ARIOSTO, "*Orl. Fur.*" can. xi. 1.

BOOK III

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF
HENRY THE SEVENTH
OF ENGLAND
BY
JOHN HALLAM
ESQ.
OF LINCOLN'S INN
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The Return of Walter de Montreal to his Fortress.

WHEN Walter de Montreal and his mercenaries quitted Corneto, they made the best of their way to Rome; arriving there long before the barons, they met with a similar reception at the gates, but Montreal prudently forbore all attack and menace, and contented himself with sending his trusty Rodolf into the city to seek Rienzi, and to crave permission to enter with his troop. Rodolf returned in a shorter time than was anticipated. "Well," said Montreal impatiently, "you have the order, I suppose. Shall we bid them open the gates?"

"Bid them open our graves," replied the Saxon, bluntly. "I trust my next heraldry will be to a more friendly court."

"How! what mean you?"

"Briefly this: I found the new governor, or whatever his title, in the palace of the Capitol, surrounded

by guards and councillors, and in a suit of the finest armour I ever saw out of Milan."

"Pest on his armour! give us his answer."

" 'Tell Walter de Montreal,' said he, then, if you will have it, 'that Rome is no longer a den of thieves; tell him, that if he enters he must abide a trial——' "

"A trial!" cried Montreal, grinding his teeth.

" 'For participation in the evil doings of Werner and his freebooters.' "

"Ha!"

" 'Tell him, moreover, that Rome declares war against all robbers, whether in tent or tower, and that we order him in forty-eight hours to quit the territories of the Church.' "

"He thinks, then, not only to deceive, but to menace me? Well, proceed."

"That was all his reply to you; to me, however, he vouchsafed a caution still more obliging. 'Hark ye, friend,' said he, 'for every German bandit found in Rome after to-morrow, our welcome will be cord and gibbet! Begone.' "

"Enough! enough!" cried Montreal, colouring with rage and shame. "Rodolf, you have a skilful eye in these matters; how many Northmen would it take to give that same gibbet to the upstart?"

Rodolf scratched his huge head, and seemed awhile lost in calculation. At length he said, "You, captain, must be the best judge; when I tell you, that twenty thousand Romans are the least of his force; so I heard

by the way ; and this evening he is to accept the crown, and depose the emperor."

"Ha, ha !" laughed Montreal, "is he so mad ? then he will want not our aid to hang himself. My friends, let us wait the result. At present, neither barons nor people seem likely to fill our coffers. Let us across the country to Terracina. Thank the saints," and Montreal (who was not without a strange kind of devotion, —indeed he deemed that virtue essential to chivalry) crossed himself piously, "the free companions are never long without quarters !"

"Hurrah for the Knight of St John !" cried the mercenaries. "And hurrah for fair Provence and bold Germany !" added the knight, as he waved his hand on high, struck spurs into his already wearied horse, and breaking out into his favourite song—

" His steed and his sword,
And his lady the peerless," &c.,

Montreal, with his troop, struck gallantly across the Campagna.

The Knight of St John soon, however, fell into an absorbed and moody reverie ; and his followers imitating the silence of their chief, in a few minutes the clatter of their arms and the jingle of their spurs alone disturbed the stillness of the wide and gloomy plains across which they made towards Terracina. Montreal was recalling with bitter resentment his conference with Rienzi ; and, proud of his own sagacity and talent for scheming, he was humbled and vexed at the discovery

that he had been duped by a wilier intriguer. His ambitious designs on Rome, too, were crossed, and even crushed for the moment, by the very means to which he had looked for their execution. He had seen enough of the barons to feel assured that while Stephen Colonna lived, the head of the order, he was not likely to obtain that mastery in the state which, if leagued with a more ambitious or a less timid and less potent signor, might reward his aid in expelling Rienzi. Under all circumstances, he deemed it advisable to remain aloof. Should Rienzi grow strong, Montreal might make the advantageous terms he desired with the barons ; should Rienzi's power decay, his pride, necessarily humbled, might drive him to seek the assistance and submit to the proposals of Montreal. The ambition of the Provençal, though vast and daring, was not of a consistent and persevering nature. Action and enterprise were dearer to him, as yet, than the rewards which they proffered ; and if baffled in one quarter, he turned himself, with the true spirit of the knight-errant, to any other field for his achievements. Louis, king of Hungary, stern, warlike, implacable, seeking vengeance for the murder of his brother, the ill-fated husband of Joanna (the beautiful and guilty Queen of Naples—the Mary Stuart of Italy), had already prepared himself to subject the garden of Campania to the Hungarian yoke. Already his bastard brother had entered Italy—already some of the Neapolitan states had declared in his favour—already promises had been held out by the northern monarch to

the scattered companies—and already those fierce mercenaries gathered menacingly round the frontiers of that Eden of Italy, attracted, as vultures to the carcass, by the preparation of war and the hope of plunder. Such was the field to which the bold mind of Montreal now turned its thoughts; and his soldiers had joyfully conjectured his design when they had heard him fix Terracina as their bourne. Provident of every resource, and refining his audacious and unprincipled valour by a sagacity which promised, when years had more matured and sobered his restless chivalry, to rank him among the most dangerous enemies Italy had ever known, on the first sign of Louis's warlike intentions, Montreal had seized and fortified a strong castle on that delicious coast beyond Terracina, by which lies the celebrated pass once held by Fabius against Hannibal, and which Nature has so favoured for war as for peace, that a handful of armed men might stop the march of an army. The possession of such a fortress on the very frontiers of Naples gave Montreal an importance of which he trusted to avail himself with the Hungarian king; and now, thwarted in his more grand and aspiring projects upon Rome, his sanguine, active, and elastic spirit congratulated itself upon the resource it had secured.

The band halted at nightfall on this side the Pontine Marshes, seizing without scruple some huts and sheds, from which they ejected the miserable tenants, and slaughtering with no greater ceremony the swine, cattle, and poultry of a neighbouring farm. Shortly

after sunrise they crossed those fatal swamps which had already been partially drained by Boniface VIII. ; and Montreal, refreshed by sleep, reconciled to his late mortification by the advantages opened to him in the approaching war with Naples, and rejoicing as he approached a home which held one who alone divided his heart with ambition, had resumed all the gaiety which belonged to his Gallic birth and his reckless habits. And that deadly but consecrated road, where yet may be seen the labours of Augustus, in the canal which had witnessed the Voyage so humorously described by Horace, echoed with the loud laughter and frequent snatches of wild song by which the barbarian robbers enlivened their rapid march.

It was noon when the company entered upon that romantic pass I have before referred to—the ancient Lantulæ. High to the left rose steep and lofty rocks, then covered by the prodigal verdure and the countless flowers of the closing May ; while to the right the sea, gentle as a lake, and blue as heaven, rippled musically at their feet. Montreal, who largely possessed the poetry of his land, which is so eminently allied with a love of nature, might at another time have enjoyed the beauty of the scene ; but at that moment less external and more household images were busy within him.

Abruptly ascending where a winding path up the mountain offered a rough and painful road to their horses' feet, the band at length arrived before a strong fortress of grey stone, whose towers were concealed by

the lofty foliage, until they emerged sullenly and suddenly from the laughing verdure. The sound of the bugle, the pennon of the knight, the rapid watchword, produced a loud shout of welcome from a score or two of grim soldiery on the walls ; the portcullis was raised, and Montreal, throwing himself hastily from his panting steed, sprung across the threshold of a jutting porch, and traversed a huge hall, when a lady— young, fair, and richly dressed—met him with a step equally swift, and fell breathless and overjoyed into his arms.

“My Walter ! my dear, dear Walter ; welcome—ten thousand welcomes !”

“Adeline, my beautiful—my adored—I see thee again !”

Such were the greetings interchanged as Montreal pressed his lady to his heart, kissing away her tears, and lifting her face to his, while he gazed on its delicate bloom with all the wistful anxiety of affection after absence.

“Fairest,” said he tenderly, “thou hast pined, thou hast lost roundness and colour since we parted. Come, come, thou art too gentle, or too foolish, for a soldier’s love.”

“Ah, Walter !” replied Adeline clinging to him, “now thou art returned, and I shall be well. Thou wilt not leave me again a long, long time.”

“Sweet one, no ;” and flinging his arm round her waist, the lovers—for alas ! they were not wedded !—retired to the more private chambers of the castle.

CHAPTER II.

The Life of Love and War—The Messenger of Peace—The Joust.

GIRT with his soldiery, secure in his feudal hold, enchanted with the beauty of the earth, sky, and sea around, and passionately adoring his Adeline, Montreal for a while forgot all his more stirring projects and his ruder occupations. His nature was capable of great tenderness, as of great ferocity; and his heart smote him when he looked at the fair cheek of his lady, and saw that even his presence did not suffice to bring back the smile and the fresh hues of old. Often he cursed that fatal oath of his knightly order which forbade him to wed, though with one more than his equal; and remorse embittered his happiest hours. That gentle lady in that robber hold, severed from all she had been taught most to prize—mother, friends, and fair fame—only loved her seducer the more intensely; only the more concentrated upon one object all the womanly and tender feelings denied every other and less sinful vent. But she felt her shame, though she sought to conceal it, and a yet more gnawing grief than even that of shame contributed to prey upon her spirits and undermine her health. Yet, withal, in

Montreal's presence she was happy even in regret ; and in her declining health she had at least a consolation in the hope to die while his love was undiminished. Sometimes they made short excursions, for the disturbed state of the country forbade them to wander far from the castle, through the sunny woods, and along the glassy sea, which make the charm of that delicious scenery ; and that mixture of the savage with the tender, the wild escort, the tent in some green glade in the woods at noon, the lute and voice of Adeline, with the fierce soldiers grouped and listening at the distance, might have well suited the verse of Ariosto, and harmonised singularly with that strange, disordered, yet chivalric time, in which the Classic South became the seat of the Northern Romance. Still, however, Montreal maintained his secret intercourse with the Hungarian king, and, plunged in new projects, willingly forsook for the present all his designs on Rome. Yet deemed he that his more august ambition was only delayed, and, bright in the more distant prospects of his adventurous career, rose the Capitol of Rome and shone the sceptre of the Cæsars.

One day, as Montreal, with a small troop in attendance, passed on horseback near the walls of Terracina, the gates were suddenly thrown open, and a numerous throng issued forth, preceded by a singular figure, whose steps they followed bareheaded and with loud blessings ; a train of monks closed the procession, chanting a hymn, of which the concluding words were as follows :—

“ Beauteous on the mountains—lo,
The feet of him glad tidings gladly bringing ;
The flowers along his pathway grow,
And voices, heard aloft, to angel harps are singing ;
And strife and slaughter cease
Before thy blessed way, Young Messenger of Peace !
O'er the mount, and through the moor,
Glide thy holy steps secure.
Day and night no fear thou knowest,
Lonely—but with God thou goest.
Where the Heathen rage the fiercest,
Through the armed throng thou piercest.
For thy coat of mail, bedight
In thy spotless robe of white.
For the sinful sword—thy hand
Bearing bright the silver wand.
Through the camp and through the court,
Through the bandit's gloomy fort,
On the mission of the dove,
Speeds the minister of love ;
By a word the wildest taming,
And the world to Christ reclaiming :
While, as once the waters trod
By the footsteps of thy God,
War, and wrath, and rapine cease,
Hush'd round thy charmed path, O Messenger of Peace ! ”

The stranger to whom these honours were paid was a young unbearded man, clothed in white wrought with silver : he was unarmed and barefooted ; in his hand he held a tall silver wand. Montreal and his party halted in astonishment and wonder, and the knight, spurring his horse towards the crowd, confronted the stranger.

“ How, friend,” quoth the Provençal, “ is thine a new order of pilgrims, or what especial holiness has won thee this homage ? ”

“ Back, back,” cried some of the bolder of the crowd,

“let not the robber dare arrest the Messenger of Peace.”

Montreal waved his hand disdainfully.

“I speak not to you, good sirs, and the worthy friars in your rear know full well that I never injured herald or palmer.”

The monks, ceasing from their hymn, advanced hastily to the spot ; and indeed the devotion of Montreal had ever induced him to purchase the goodwill of whatever monastery neighboured his wandering home.

“My son,” said the eldest of the brethren, “this is a strange spectacle, and a sacred ; and when thou learnest all, thou wilt rather give the messenger a passport of safety from the unthinking courage of thy friends than intercept his path of peace.”

“Ye puzzle still more my simple brain,” said Montreal, impatiently, “let the youth speak for himself ; I perceive that on his mantle are the arms of Rome blended with other quarterings, which are a mystery to me,—though sufficiently versed in heraldic art, as befits a noble and a knight.”

“Signor,” said the youth, gravely, “know in me the messenger of Cola di Rienzi, Tribune of Rome, charged with letters to many a baron and prince in the ways between Rome and Naples. The arms wrought upon my mantle are those of the Pontiff, the City, and the Tribune.”

“Umph ; thou must have bold nerves to traverse the Campagna with no other weapon than that stick of silver !”

“Thou art mistaken, sir knight,” replied the youth, boldly, “and judgest of the present by the past; know that not a single robber now lurks within the Campagna; the arms of the Tribune have rendered every road around the city as secure as the broadest street of the city itself.”

“Thou tellest me wonders.”

“Through the forest—and in the fortress,—through the wildest solitudes,—through the most populous towns,—have my comrades borne this silver wand unmolested and unscathed; wherever we pass along, thousands hail us, and tears of joy bless the messengers of him who hath expelled the brigand from his hold, the tyrant from his castle, and insured the gains of the merchant and the hut of the peasant.”

“*Pardieu*,” said Montreal, with a stern smile, “I ought to be thankful for the preference shown to me; I have not yet received the commands, nor felt the vengeance of the Tribune; yet, methinks, my humble castle lies just within the patrimony of St Peter.”

“Pardon me, signor cavalier,” said the youth; “but do I address the renowned Knight of St John, warrior of the Cross, yet leader of banditti?”

“Boy, you are bold; I am Walter de Montreal.”

“I am bound, then, sir knight, to your castle.”

“Take care how thou reach it before me, or thou standest a fair chance of a quick exit. How now, my friends!” seeing that the crowd at these words gathered closer round the messenger, “Think ye that I, who have my mate in kings, would find a victim in an un-

armed boy? Fie! give way—give way. Young man, follow me homeward; you are safe in my castle as in your mother's arms." So saying, Montreal, with great dignity and deliberate gravity, rode slowly towards his castle, his soldiers, wondering, at a little distance, and the white-robed messenger following with the crowd, who refused to depart; so great was their enthusiasm, that they even ascended to the gates of the dreaded castle, and insisted on waiting without until the return of the youth assured them of his safety.

Montreal, who, however lawless elsewhere, strictly preserved the rights of the meanest boor in his immediate neighbourhood, and rather affected popularity with the poor, bade the crowd enter the courtyard, ordered his servitors to provide them with wine and refreshment, regaled the good monks in his great hall, and then led the way to a small room, where he received the messenger.

"This," said the youth, "will best explain my mission," as he placed a letter before Montreal.

The knight cut the silk with his dagger, and read the epistle with great composure.

"Your Tribune," said he, when he had finished it, "has learned the laconic style of power very soon. He orders me to render this castle, and vacate the papal territory, within ten days. He is obliging; I must have breathing-time to consider the proposal; be seated, I pray you, young sir. Forgive me, but I should have imagined that your lord had enough upon his hands with his Roman barons, to make him a little

more indulgent to us foreign visitors. Stephen Colonna——”

“Is returned to Rome, and has taken the oath of allegiance; the Savelli, the Orsini, the Frangipani, have all subscribed their submission to the Buono Stato.”

“How!” cried Montreal, in great surprise.

“Not only have they returned, but they have submitted to the dispersion of all their mercenaries and the dismantling of all their fortifications. The iron of the Orsini palace now barricades the Capitol, and the stonework of the Colonna and the Savelli has added new battlements to the gates of the Lateran and St Laurence.”

“Wonderful man!” said Montreal, with reluctant admiration. “By what means was this effected?”

“A stern command and a strong force to back it. At the first sound of the great bell, twenty thousand Romans rise in arms. What to such an army are the brigands of an Orsini or a Colonna? Sir knight, your valour and renown make even Rome admire you; and I, a Roman, bid you beware.”

“Well, I thank thee—thy news, friend, robs me of breath. So the barons submit, then?”

“Yes: on the first day, one of the Colonna, the Lord Adrian, took the oath; within a week, Stephen, assured of safe conduct, left Palestrina, the Savelli in his train; the Orsini followed—even Martino di Porto has silently succumbed.”

“The Tribune—but is that his dignity?—methought he was to be king——”

“He was offered, and he refused, the title. His present rank, which arrogates no patrician honours, went far to conciliate the nobles.”

“A wise knave!—I beg pardon, a sagacious prince!—Well, then, the Tribune lords it mightily, I suppose, over the great Roman names?”

“Pardon me—he enforces impartial justice from peasant or patrician; but he preserves to the nobles all their just privileges and legal rank.”

“Ha!—and the vain puppets, so they keep the semblance, scarce miss the substance—I understand. But this shows genius—the Tribune is unwed, I think. Does he look among the Colonna for a wife?”

“Sir knight, the Tribune is already married; within three days after his ascension to power, he won and bore home the daughter of the Baron di Raselli.”

“Raselli! no great name; he might have done better.”

“But it is said,” resumed the youth, smiling, “that the Tribune will shortly be allied to the Colonna, through his fair sister the Signora Irene. The Baron di Castello woos her.”

“What, Adrian Colonna! Enough! you have convinced me that a man who contents the people and awes or conciliates the nobles is born for empire. My answer to this letter I will send myself. For your news, sir messenger, accept this jewel,” and the knight took from his finger a gem of some price. “Nay, shrink not, it was as freely given to me as it is now to thee.”

The youth, who had been agreeably surprised and

impressed by the manner of the renowned freebooter, and who was not a little astonished himself with the ease and familiarity with which he had been relating to Fra Moreale, in his own fortress, the news of Rome, bowed low as he accepted the gift.

The astute Provençal, who saw the evident impression he had made, perceived also that it might be of advantage in delaying the measures he might deem it expedient to adopt. "Assure the Tribune," said he, on dismissing the messenger, "shouldst thou return ere my letter arrive, that I admire his genius, hail his power, and will not fail to consider as favourably as I may of his demand."

"Better," said the messenger, warmly (he was of good blood and gentle bearing)—"better ten tyrants for our enemy than one Montreal."

"An enemy! believe me, sir, I seek no enmity with princes who know how to govern, or a people that has the wisdom at once to rule and to obey."

The whole of that day, however, Montreal remained thoughtful and uneasy; he despatched trusty messengers to the governor of Aquila (who was then in correspondence with Louis of Hungary), to Naples, and to Rome: the last charged with a letter to the Tribune, which, without absolutely compromising himself, affected submission, and demanded only a longer leisure for the preparations of departure. But, at the same time, fresh fortifications were added to the castle, ample provisions were laid in, and, night and day, spies and scouts were stationed along the pass, and in the town of Terracina.

Montreal was precisely the chief who prepared most for war when most he pretended peace.

One morning, the fifth from the appearance of the Roman messenger, Montreal, after narrowly surveying his outworks and his stores, and feeling satisfied that he could hold out at least a month's siege, repaired, with a gayer countenance than he had lately worn, to the chamber of Adeline.

The lady was seated by the casement of the tower, from which might be seen the glorious landscape of woods, and vales, and orange-groves—a strange garden for such a palace! As she leant her face upon her hand, with her profile slightly turned to Montreal, there was something ineffably graceful in the bend of her neck—the small head so expressive of gentle blood—with the locks parted in front in that simple fashion which modern times have so happily revived. But the expression of the half-averted face, the abstracted intentness of the gaze, and the profound stillness of the attitude, were so sad and mournful, that Montreal's purposed greeting of gallantry and gladness died upon his lips. He approached in silence, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

Adeline turned, and taking the hand in hers, pressed it to her heart, and smiled away all her sadness. “Dearest,” said Montreal, “couldst thou know how much any shadow of grief on thy bright face darkens my heart, thou wouldst never grieve. But no wonder that in these rude walls—no female of equal rank near thee, and such mirth as Montreal can summon to his halls,

grating to thy ear—no wonder that thou repentest thee of thy choice.”

“Ah, no—no, Walter, I never repent. I did but think of our child as you entered. Alas! he was our only child! How fair he was, Walter; how he resembled thee!”

“Nay, he had thine eyes and brow,” replied the knight, with a faltering voice, and turning away his head.

“Walter,” resumed the lady, sighing, “do you remember?—this is his birthday. He is ten years old to-day. We have loved each other eleven years, and thou hast not tired yet of thy poor Adeline.”

“As well might the saints weary of paradise,” replied Montreal, with an enamoured tenderness, which changed into softness the whole character of his heroic countenance.

“Could I think so, I should indeed be blest!” answered Adeline. “But a little while longer, and the few charms I yet possess must fade; and what other claim have I on thee?”

“All claim;—the memory of thy first blushes—thy first kiss—of thy devoted sacrifices—of thy patient wanderings—of thy uncomplaining love! Ah, Adeline, we are of Provence, not of Italy; and when did knight of Provence avoid his foe, or forsake his love? But enough, dearest, of home and melancholy for to-day. I come to bid thee forth. I have sent on the servitors to pitch our tent beside the sea—we will enjoy the orange-blossoms while we may. Ere another week

pass over us, we may have sterner pastime and closer confines."

"How, dearest Walter! thou dost not apprehend danger?"

"Thou speakest, lady-bird," said Montreal, laughing, "as if danger were novelty; methinks, by this time, thou shouldst know it as the atmosphere we breathe."

"Ah, Walter, is this to last for ever? Thou art now rich and renowned; canst thou not abandon this career of strife?"

"Now, out on thee, Adeline! What are riches and renown but the means to power! And for strife, the shield of warriors was my cradle—pray the saints it be my bier! These wild and wizard extremes of life—from the bower to the tent—from the cavern to the palace—to-day a wandering exile, to-morrow the equal of kings—make the true element of the chivalry of my Norman sires. Normandy taught me war, and sweet Provence love. Kiss me, dear Adeline; and now let thy handmaids attire thee. Forget not thy lute, sweet one. We will rouse the echoes with the songs of Provence."

The ductile temper of Adeline yielded easily to the gaiety of her lord; and the party soon sallied from the castle towards the spot in which Montreal had designed their resting-place during the heats of day. But already prepared for all surprise, the castle was left strictly guarded, and besides the domestic servitors of the castle, a detachment of ten soldiers, completely armed, accompanied the lovers. Montreal himself wore

his corslet, and his squires followed with his helmet and lance. Beyond the narrow defile at the base of the castle, the road at that day opened into a broad patch of verdure, circled on all sides, save that open to the sea, by wood, interspersed with myrtle and orange, and a wilderness of odorous shrubs. In this space, and sheltered by the broad-spreading and classic *fagus* (so improperly translated into the English *beech*), a gay pavilion was prepared, which commanded the view of the sparkling sea;—shaded from the sun, but open to the gentle breeze. This was poor Adeline's favourite recreation, if recreation it might be called. She rejoiced to escape from the gloomy walls of her castellated prison, and to enjoy the sunshine and the sweets of that voluptuous climate without the fatigue which of late all exercise occasioned her. It was a gallantry on the part of Montreal, who foresaw how short an interval might elapse before the troops of Rienzi besieged his walls; and who was himself no less at home in the bower than in the field.

As they reclined within the pavilion—the lover and his lady—of the attendants without, some lounged idly on the beach; some prepared the awning of a pleasure-boat against the decline of the sun; some, in a ruder tent, out of sight in the wood, arranged the mid-day repast; while the strings of the lute, touched by Montreal himself with a careless skill, gave their music to the dreamy stillness of the noon.

While thus employed, one of Montreal's scouts arrived breathless and heated at the tent.

“Captain,” said he, “a company of thirty lances completely armed, with a long retinue of squires and pages, have just quitted Terracina. Their banners bear the twofold insignia of Rome and the Colonna.”

“Ho!” said Montreal, gaily, “such a troop is a welcome addition to our company; send our squire hither.”

The squire appeared.

“Hie thee on thy steed towards the procession thou wilt meet within the pass (nay, sweet lady mine, no forbiddal!), seek the chief, and say that the good knight Walter de Montreal sends him greeting, and prays him, in passing our proper territory, to rest awhile with us as a welcome guest; and—stay,—add, that if to while an hour or so in gentle pastime be acceptable to him, Walter de Montreal would rejoice to break a lance with him, or any knight in his train, in honour of our respective ladies. Hie thee quick!”

“Walter, Walter,” began Adeline, who had that keen and delicate sensitiveness to her situation which her reckless lord often wantonly forgot; “Walter, dear Walter, canst thou think it honour to——”

“Hush thee, sweet *Fleur-de-lis*! Thou hast not seen pastime this many a day; I long to convince thee that thou art still the fairest lady in Italy—ay, and of Christendom. But these Italians are craven knights, and thou needst not fear that my proffer will be accepted. But in truth, lady mine, I rejoice for graver objects, that chance throws a Roman noble, perhaps a Colonna, in my way;—women understand not these

matters; and aught concerning Rome touches us home at this moment."

With that the knight frowned, as was his wont in thought, and Adeline ventured to say no more, but retired to the interior division of the pavilion.

Meanwhile the squire approached the procession, that had now reached the middle of the pass. And a stately and gallant company it was: if the complete harness of the soldiery seemed to attest a warlike purpose, it was contradicted on the other hand by a numerous train of unarmed squires and pages gorgeously attired, while the splendid blazon of two heralds preceding the standard-bearers, proclaimed their object as peaceful, and their path as sacred. It required but a glance at the company to tell the leader. Arrayed in a breastplate of steel, wrought profusely with gold arabesques, over which was a mantle of dark green velvet, bordered with pearls, while above his long dark locks waved a black ostrich plume in a high Macedonian cap, such as, I believe, is now worn by the Grand Master of the order of St Constantine, rode in the front of the party, a young cavalier, distinguished from his immediate comrades, partly by his graceful presence, and partly by his splendid dress.

The squire approached respectfully, and, dismounting, delivered himself of his charge.

The young cavalier smiled, as he answered, "Bear back to Sir Walter de Montreal the greeting of Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello, and say, that the solemn object of my present journey will scarce permit me to

encounter the formidable lance of so celebrated a knight ; and I regret this the more, inasmuch as I may not yield to any dame the palm of my liege lady's beauty. I must live in hope of a happier occasion. For the rest, I will cheerfully abide for some few hours the guest of so courteous a host."

The squire bowed low. "My master," said he, hesitatingly, "will grieve much to miss so noble an opponent. But my message refers to all this knightly and gallant train ; and if the Lord Adrian di Castello deems himself forbidden the joust by the object of his present journey, surely one of his comrades will be his proxy with my master."

Out and quickly spoke a young noble by the side of Adrian, Riccardo Annibaldi, who afterwards did good service both to the Tribune and to Rome, and whose valour brought him, in later life, to an untimely end.

"By the Lord Adrian's permission," cried he, "I will break a lance with——"

"Hush ! Annibaldi," interrupted Adrian. "And you, sir squire, know, that Adrian di Castello permits no proxy in arms. Advise the Knight of St John that we accept his hospitality, and if, after some converse on graver matters, he should still desire so light an entertainment, I will forget that I am the ambassador to Naples, and remember only that I am a Knight of the Empire. You have your answer."

The squire with much ceremony made his obeisance, remounted his steed, and returned in a half-gallop to his master.

“Forgive me, dear Annibaldi,” said Adrian, “that I balked your valour; and believe me that I never more longed to break a lance against any man than I do against this boasting Frenchman. But bethink you, that though to us, brought up in the dainty laws of chivalry, Walter de Montreal is the famous knight of Provence, to the Tribune of Rome, whose grave mission we now fulfil, he is but the mercenary captain of a free company. Grievously in his eyes should we sully our dignity by so wanton and irrelevant a holiday conflict with a declared and professional brigand.”

“For all that,” said Annibaldi, “the brigand ought not to boast that a Roman knight shunned a Provençal lance.”

“Cease, I pray thee!” said Adrian, impatiently. In fact, the young Colonna, already chafed bitterly against his discreet and dignified rejection of Montreal’s proffer, and recollecting with much pique the disparaging manner in which the Provençal had spoken of the Roman chivalry, as well as a certain tone of superiority, which in all warlike matters Montreal had assumed over him—he now felt his cheek burn and his lip quiver. Highly skilled in the martial accomplishments of his time, he had a natural and excusable desire to prove that he was at least no unworthy antagonist even of the best lance in Italy; and, added to this, the gallantry of the age made him feel it a sort of treason to his mistress to forego any means of asserting her perfections.

It was, therefore, with considerable irritation that Adrian, as the pavilion of Montreal became visible, perceived the squire returning to him. And the reader will judge how much this was increased when the latter, once more dismounting, accosted him thus :

“ My master, the Knight of St John, on hearing the courteous answer of the Lord Adrian di Castello, bids me say, that lest the graver converse the Lord Adrian refers to should mar gentle and friendly sport, he ventures respectfully to suggest, that the tilt should preface the converse. The sod before the tent is so soft and smooth, that even a fall could be attended with *no danger* to knight or steed.”

“ By our lady !” cried Adrian and Annibaldi in a breath, “ but thy last words are discourteous ; and ” (proceeded Adrian, recovering himself) “ since thy master will have it so, let him look to his horse’s girths. I will not gainsay his fancy.”

Montreal, who had thus insisted upon the exhibition, partly, it may be, from the gay and ruffling bravado common still amongst his brave countrymen ; partly because he was curious of exhibiting before those who might soon be his open foes his singular and unrivalled address in arms, was yet more moved to it on learning the name of the leader of the Roman company ; for his vain and haughty spirit, however it had disguised resentment at the time, had by no means forgiven certain warm expressions of Adrian in the palace of Stephen Colonna, and in the unfortunate journey to Corneto. While Adrian, halting at the en-

trance of the defile, aided by his squires, indignantly but carefully indued the rest of his armour, and saw, himself, to the girths, stirrup-leathers, and various buckles, in the caparison of his noble charger, Montreal in great glee kissed his lady, who, though too soft to be angry, was deeply vexed (and yet her vexation half forgotten in fear for his safety), snatched up her scarf of blue, which he threw over his breastplate, and completed his array with the indifference of a man certain of victory. He was destined, however, to one disadvantage, and that the greatest; his armour and lance had been brought from the castle—not his war-horse. His palfrey was too slight to bear the great weight of his armour, nor amongst his troop was there one horse that for power and bone could match with Adrian's. He chose, however, the strongest that was at hand, and a loud shout from his wild followers testified their admiration when he sprung unaided from the ground into the saddle—a rare and difficult feat of agility in a man completely arrayed in the ponderous armour which issued at that day from the forges of Milan, and was worn far more weighty in Italy than any other part of Europe. While both companies grouped slowly, and mingled in a kind of circle round the green turf, and the Roman heralds, with bustling importance, attempted to marshal the spectators into order, Montreal rode his charger round the sward, forcing it into various caracoles, and exhibiting, with the vanity that belonged to him, his exquisite and practised horsemanship.

At length Adrian, his visor down, rode slowly into the green space, amidst the cheers of his party. The two knights, at either end, gravely fronted each other; they made the courtesies with their lances, which, in friendly and sportive encounters, were customary; and, as they thus paused for the signal of encounter, the Italians trembled for the honour of their chief: Montreal's stately height and girth of chest forming a strong contrast, even in armour, to the form of his opponent, which was rather under the middle standard, and, though firmly knit, slightly and slenderly built. But to that perfection was skill in arms brought in those times, that great strength and size were far from being either the absolute requisites, or even the usual attributes, of the more celebrated knights; in fact, so much was effected by the power and the management of the steed, that a light weight in the rider was often rather to his advantage than his prejudice; and, even at a later period, the most accomplished victors in the tourney, the French Bayard and the English Sydney, were far from remarkable either for bulk or stature.

Whatever the superiority of Montreal in physical power, was, in much, counterbalanced by the inferiority of his horse, which, though a thick-built and strong Calabrian, had neither the blood, bone, nor practised discipline of the northern charger of the Roman. The shining coat of the latter, coal black, was set off by a scarlet cloth wrought in gold; the neck and shoulders

were clad in scales of mail; and from the forehead projected a long point, like the horn of a unicorn, while on its crest waved a tall plume of scarlet and white feathers. As the mission of Adrian to Naples was that of pomp and ceremony to a court of great splendour, so his array and retinue were befitting the occasion and the passion for show that belonged to the time; and the very bridle of his horse, which was three inches broad, was decorated with gold, and even jewels. The knight himself was clad in mail, which had tested the finest art of the celebrated Ludovico of Milan; and, altogether, his appearance was unusually gallant and splendid, and seemed still more so beside the plain but brightly-polished and artfully-flexile armour of Montreal (adorned only with his lady's scarf), and the common and rude mail of his charger. This contrast, however, was not welcome to the Provençal, whose vanity was especially indulged in warlike equipments; and who, had he foreseen the "pastime" that awaited him, would have outshone even the Colonna.

The trumpeters of either party gave a short blast—the knights remained erect as statues of iron; a second, and each slightly bent over his saddle-bow; a third, and with spears couched, slackened reins, and at full speed, on they rushed, and fiercely they met midway. With the reckless arrogance which belonged to him, Montreal had imagined that at the first touch of his lance Adrian would have been unhorsed; but to his great surprise the young Roman remained firm, and amidst the shouts of his party, passed on to the other

end of the lists. Montreal himself was rudely shaken, but lost neither seat nor stirrup.

“This can be no carpet-knight,” muttered Montreal between his teeth, as, this time, he summoned all his skill for a second encounter; while Adrian, aware of the great superiority of his charger, resolved to bring it to bear against his opponent. Accordingly, when the knights again rushed forward, Adrian, covering himself well with his buckler, directed his care less against the combatant, whom he felt no lance wielded by mortal hand was likely to dislodge, than against the less noble animal he bestrode. The shock of Montreal’s charge was like an avalanche—his lance shivered into a thousand pieces, Adrian lost both stirrups, and but for the strong iron bows which guarded the saddle in front and rear, would have been fairly unhorsed; as it was, he was almost doubled back by the encounter, and his ears rung and his eyes reeled, so that for a moment or two he almost lost all consciousness. But his steed had well repaid its nurture and discipline. Just as the combatants closed, the animal, rearing on high, pressed forward with its mighty crest against its opponent with a force so irresistible, as to drive back Montreal’s horse several paces: while Adrian’s lance, poised with exquisite skill, striking against the Provençal’s helmet, somewhat rudely diverted the knight’s attention for the moment from his rein. Montreal, drawing the curb too tightly in the suddenness of his recovery, the horse reared on end; and, receiving at that instant full upon his breastplate the sharp horn and mailed crest of

Adrian's charger, fell back over its rider upon the sward. Montreal disencumbered himself in great rage and shame, as a faint cry from his pavilion reached his ear, and redoubled his mortification. He rose with a lightness which astonished the beholders; for so heavy was the armour worn at that day, that few knights once stretched upon the ground could rise without assistance; and drawing his sword, cried out fiercely—"On foot, on foot!—the fall was not mine, but this accursed beast's, that I must needs for my sins raise to the rank of a charger. Come on——"

"Nay, sir knight," said Adrian, drawing off his gauntlets and unbuckling his helmet, which he threw on the ground, "I come to thee a guest and a friend; but to fight on foot is the encounter of mortal foes. Did I accept thy offer, my defeat would but stain thy knight-hood."

Montreal, whose passion had beguiled him for the moment, sullenly acquiesced in this reasoning. Adrian hastened to soothe his antagonist. "For the rest," said he, "I cannot pretend to the prize. Your lance lost me my stirrups—mine left you unshaken. You say right; the defeat, if any, was that of your steed."

"We may meet again when I am more equally horsed," said Montreal, still chafing.

"Now, Our Lady forbid!" exclaimed Adrian, with so devout an earnestness that the bystanders could not refrain from laughing; and even Montreal grimly, and half reluctantly, joined in the merriment. The courtesy of his foe, however, conciliated and touched the more

frank and soldierly qualities of his nature, and, composing himself, he replied :—

“ Signor di Castello, I rest your debtor for a courtesy that I have but little imitated. Howbeit, if thou wouldst bind me to thee for ever, thou wilt suffer me to send for my own charger, and afford me a chance to retrieve mine honour. With that steed, or with one equal to thine, which seems to me of the English breed, I will gage all I possess, lands, castle, and gold, sword and spurs, to maintain this pass, one by one, against all thy train.”

Fortunately, perhaps, for Adrian, ere he could reply, Riccardo Annibaldi cried, with great warmth, “ Sir knight, I have with me two steeds well practised in the tourney; take thy choice, and accept in me a champion of the Roman against the French chivalry;—there is my gage.”

“ Signor,” replied Montreal, with ill-suppressed delight, “ thy proffer shows so gallant and free a spirit, that it were foul sin in me to balk it. I accept thy gage, and whichever of thy steeds thou rejectest, in God’s name bring it hither, and let us waste no words before action.”

Adrian, who felt that hitherto the Romans had been more favoured by fortune than merit, vainly endeavoured to prevent this second hazard. But Annibaldi was greatly chafed, and his high rank rendered it impolitic in Adrian to offend him by peremptory prohibition; the Colonna reluctantly, therefore, yielded his assent to the engagement. Annibaldi’s steeds were led to the

spot, the one a noble roan, the other a bay, of somewhat less breeding and bone, but still of great strength and price. Montreal finding the choice pressed upon him, gallantly selected the latter and less excellent.

Annibaldi was soon arrayed for the encounter, and Adrian gave the word to the trumpeters. The Roman was of a stature almost equal to that of Montreal, and though some years younger, seemed, in his armour, nearly of the same thews and girth, so that the present antagonists appeared at the first glance more evenly matched than the last. But this time Montreal, well horsed, inspired to the utmost by shame and pride, felt himself a match for an army: and he met the young baron with such prowess, that while the very plume on his casque seemed scarcely stirred, the Italian was thrown several paces from his steed, and it was not till some moments after his visor was removed by his squires that he recovered his senses. This event restored Montreal to all his natural gaiety of humour, and effectually raised the spirits of his followers, who had felt much humbled by the previous encounter.

He himself assisted Annibaldi to rise with great courtesy, and a profusion of compliments, which the proud Roman took in stern silence, and then led the way to the pavilion, loudly ordering the banquet to be spread. Annibaldi, however, loitered behind, and Adrian, who penetrated his thoughts, and who saw that over their cups a quarrel between the Provençal and his friend was likely to ensue, drawing him aside, said: "Methinks, dear Annibaldi, it would be better if you,

with the chief of our following, were to proceed onward to Fondi, where I will join you at sunset. My squires, and some eight lances, will suffice for my safeguard here ; and, to say truth, I desire a few private words with our strange host, in the hope that he may be peaceably induced to withdraw from hence without the help of our Roman troops, who have enough elsewhere to feed their valour."

Annibaldi pressed his companion's hand : "I understand thee," he replied with a slight blush ; "and, indeed, I could but ill brook the complacent triumph of the barbarian. I accept thy offer."

CHAPTER III.

The Conversation between the Roman and the Provençal.—Adeline's History.—The Moonlit Sea.—The Lute and the Song.

As soon as Annibaldi, with the greater part of the retinue, was gone, Adrian, divesting himself of his heavy greaves, entered alone the pavilion of the Knight of St John. Montreal had already doffed all his armour, save the breastplate, and he now stepped forward to welcome his guest with the winning and easy grace which better suited his birth than his profession. He received Adrian's excuses for the absence of Annibaldi and the other knights of his train with a smile which seemed to prove how readily he divined the cause, and conducted him to the other and more private division of the pavilion, in which the repast (rendered acceptable by the late exercise of guest and host) was prepared; and here Adrian for the first time discovered Adeline. Long inurement to the various and roving life of her lover, joined to a certain pride which she derived from conscious, though forfeited, rank, gave to the outward manner of that beautiful lady an ease and freedom which often concealed, even from Montreal, her sensitiveness to her unhappy situation. At times,

indeed, when alone with Montreal, whom she loved with all the devotion of romance, she was sensible only to the charm of a presence which consoled her for all things ; but in his frequent absence, or on the admission of any stranger, the illusion vanished—the reality returned. Poor lady ! Nature had not formed, education had not reared, habit had not reconciled, her to the breath of shame !

The young Colonna was much struck by her beauty, and more by her gentle and high-born grace. Like her lord, she appeared younger than she was ; time seemed to spare a bloom which an experienced eye might have told was destined to an early grave ; and there was something almost girlish in the lightness of her form, the braided luxuriance of her rich auburn hair, and the colour that went and came, not only with every moment, but almost with every word. The contrast between her and Montreal became them both—it was the contrast of devoted reliance and protecting strength : each looked fairer in the presence of the other : and as Adrian sat down to the well-laden board, he thought he had never seen a pair more formed for the poetic legends of their native troubadours.

Montreal conversed gaily upon a thousand matters—pressed the wine-flasks—and selected for his guest the most delicate portions of the delicious *spicola* of the neighbouring sea, and the rich flesh of the wild boar of the Pontine Marshes.

“Tell me,” said Montreal, as their hunger was now

appeased—"tell me, noble Adrian, how fares your kinsman, Signor Stephen? A brave old man for his years."

"He bears him as the youngest of us," answered Adrian.

"Late events must have shocked him a little," said Montreal, with an arch smile. "Ah, you look grave—yet commend my foresight;—I was the first who prophesied to thy kinsman the rise of Cola di Rienzi; he seems a great man—never more great than in conciliating the Colonna and the Orsini."

"The Tribune," returned Adrian, evasively, "is certainly a man of extraordinary genius. And now, seeing him command, my only wonder is how he ever brooked to obey—majesty seems a very part of him."

"Men who win power, easily put on its harness, dignity," answered Montreal; "and if I hear aright (pledge me to your lady's health), the Tribune, if not himself nobly born, will soon be nobly connected."

"He is already married to a Raselli, an old Roman house," replied Adrian.

"You evade my pursuit,—*Le doux soupir! le doux soupir!* as the old Cabestan has it,"—said Montreal, laughing. "Well, you have pledged me one cup to your lady, pledge another to the fair Irene, the Tribune's sister—always provided the two are not one.—You smile and shake your head."

"I do not disguise from you, sir knight," answered Adrian, "that when my present embassy is over, I

trust the alliance between the Tribune and a Colonna will go far towards the benefit of both."

"I have heard rightly, then," said Montreal, in a grave and thoughtful tone. "Rienzi's power must, indeed, be great."

"Of that my mission is a proof. Are you aware, Signor de Montreal, that Louis, King of Hungary——"

"How! what of him?"

"Has referred the decision of the feud between himself and Joanna of Naples, respecting the death of her royal spouse, his brother, to the fiat of the Tribune? This is the first time, methinks, since the death of Constantine, that so great a confidence and so high a charge were ever intrusted to a Roman?"

"By all the saints in the calendar," cried Montreal, crossing himself, "this news is indeed amazing! The fierce Louis of Hungary waive the right of the sword, and choose other umpire than the field of battle!"

"And this," continued Adrian, in a significant tone, "this it was which induced me to obey your courteous summons. I know, brave Montreal, that you hold intercourse with Louis. Louis has given to the Tribune the best pledge of his amity and alliance; will you do wisely if you——"

"Wage war with the Hungarian's ally?" interrupted Montreal. "This you were about to add; the same thought crossed myself. My lord, pardon me—Italians sometimes invent what they wish. On the honour of a Knight of the Empire, these tidings are the naked truth?"

“By my honour, and on the Cross,” answered Adrian, drawing himself up; “and in proof thereof, I am now bound to Naples to settle with the Queen the preliminaries of the appointed trial.”

“Two crowned heads before the tribunal of a plebeian, and one a defendant against the charge of murder!” muttered Montreal; “the news might well amaze me!”

He remained musing and silent a little while, till, looking up, he caught Adeline’s tender gaze fixed upon him with that deep solicitude with which she watched the outward effect of schemes and projects she was too soft to desire to know, and too innocent to share.

“Lady mine,” said the Provençal, fondly, “how sayest thou? must we abandon our mountain castle, and these wild woodland scenes, for the dull walls of a city? I fear me so.—The Lady Adeline,” he continued, turning to Adrian, “is of a singular bias; she hates the gay crowds of streets and thoroughfares, and esteems no palace like the solitary outlaw’s hold. Yet, methinks, she might outshine all the faces of Italy—thy mistress, Lord Adrian, of course excepted.”

“It is an exception which only a lover, and that too a betrothed lover, would dare to make,” replied Adrian, gallantly.

“Nay,” said Adeline, in a voice singularly sweet and clear,—“nay, I know well at what price to value my lord’s flattery, and Signor di Castello’s courtesy. But you are bound, sir knight, to a court that, if fame speak true, boasts in its queen the very miracle and mould of beauty.”

“It is some years since I saw the Queen of Naples,” answered Adrian ; “and I little dreamed then, when I gazed upon that angel face, that I should live to hear her accused of the foulest murder that ever stained even Italian royalty.”

“And, as if resolved to prove her guilt,” said Montreal, “ere long be sure she will marry the very man who did the deed. Of this I have certain proof.”

Thus conversing, the knights wore away the daylight, and beheld from the open tent the sun cast his setting glow over the purple sea. Adeline had long retired from the board, and they now saw her seated with her handmaids on a mound by the beach ; while the sound of her lute faintly reached their ears. As Montreal caught the air, he turned from the converse, and sighing, half shaded his face with his hand. Somehow or other the two knights had worn away all the little jealousy or pique which they had conceived against each other at Rome. Both imbued with the soldier-like spirit of the age, their contest in the morning had served to inspire them with that strange kind of respect, and even cordiality, which one brave man even still (how much more at that day !) feels for another, whose courage he has proved while vindicating his own. It is like the discovery of a congenial sentiment hitherto latent ; and, in a life of camps, often establishes sudden and lasting friendship in the very lap of enmity. This feeling had been ripened by their subsequent familiar intercourse, and was increased on Adrian’s side by the feeling that, in con-

vincing Montreal of the policy of withdrawing from the Roman territories, he had obtained an advantage that well repaid whatever danger and delay he had undergone.

The sigh, and the altered manner of Montreal, did not escape Adrian, and he naturally connected it with something relating to her whose music had been its evident cause.

“Yon lovely dame,” said he, gently, “touches the lute with an exquisite and fairy hand, and that plaintive air seems to my ear as of the minstrelsy of Provence.”

“It is the air I taught her,” said Montreal, sadly, “married as it is to indifferent words, with which I first wooed a heart that should never have given itself to me! Ay, young Colonna, many a night has my boat been moored beneath the starlight Sorgia that washes her proud father’s halls, and my voice awaked the stillness of the waving sedges with a soldier’s serenade. Sweet memories! bitter fruit!”

“Why bitter? ye love each other still.”

“But I am vowed to celibacy, and Adeline de Courval is leman where she should be wedded dame. Methinks I fret at that thought even more than she—dear Adeline!”

“Your lady, as all would guess, is then nobly born?”

“She is,” answered Montreal, with a deep and evident feeling which, save in love, rarely, if ever, crossed his hardy breast. “She is! our tale is a brief one:—We loved each other as children: Her family was

wealthier than mine : we were separated. I was given to understand that she abandoned me. I despaired, and in despair I took the cross of St John. Chance threw us again together. I learned that her love was undecayed. Poor child !—she was even then, sir, but a child ! I, wild—reckless—and not unskilled, perhaps, in the arts that woo and win. She could not resist my suit or her own affection !—We fled. In those words you see the thread of my after history. My sword and my Adeline were all my fortune. Society frowned on us. The Church threatened my soul. The Grand Master my life. I became a knight of fortune. Fate and my right hand favoured me. I have made those who scorned me tremble at my name. That name shall yet blaze, a star or a meteor, in the front of troubled nations, and I may yet win by force from the pontiff the dispensation refused to my prayers. On the same day, I may offer Adeline the diadem and the ring.—Eno' of this ;—you marked Adeline's cheek !—seems it not delicate ? I like not that changeful flush—and she moves languidly—*her* step that was so blithe !”

“Change of scene and the mild south will soon restore her health,” said Adrian ; “and in your peculiar life she is so little brought into contact with others, especially of her own sex, that I trust she is but seldom made aware of whatever is painful in her situation. And woman's love, Montreal, as we both have learned, is a robe that wraps her from many a storm !”

“You speak kindly,” returned the knight ; “but you know not all our cause of grief. Adeline's father, a

proud sieur, died—they said of a broken heart—but old men die of many another disease than that ! The mother, a dame who boasted her descent from princes, bore the matter more sternly than the sire ; clamoured for revenge—which was odd, for she is as religious as a Dominican, and revenge is not Christian in a woman, though it is knightly in a man ! Well, my lord, we had one boy, our only child ; he was Adeline’s solace in my absence—his pretty ways were worth the world to her ! She loved him so, that—but he had her eyes, and looked like her when he slept—I should have been jealous ! He grew up in our wild life, strong and comely ; the young rogue, he would have been a brave knight ! My evil stars led me to Milan, where I had business with the Visconti. One bright morning in June our boy was stolen ; verily that June was like a December to us !”

“ Stolen !—how ?—by whom ? ”

“ The first question is answered easily—the boy was with his nurse in the courtyard, the idle wench left him for but a minute or two—so she avers—to fetch him some childish toy ; when she returned he was gone ; not a trace left, save his pretty cap with the plume in it ! Poor Adeline, many a time have I found her kissing that relic till it was wet with tears ! ”

“ A strange fortune, in truth. But what interest could——”

“ I will tell you,” interrupted Montreal, “ the only conjecture I could form ;—Adeline’s mother, on learning we had a son, sent to Adeline a letter that well-nigh

broke her heart, reproaching her for her love to me, and so forth, as if that had made her the vilest of the sex. She bade her take compassion on her child, and not bring him up to a robber's life—so was she pleased to style the bold career of Walter de Montreal. She offered to rear the child in her own dull halls, and fit him, no doubt, for a shaven pate and a monk's cowl. She chafed much that a mother would not part with her treasure! She alone, partly in revenge, partly in silly compassion for Adeline's child, partly, it may be, from some pious fanaticism, could, so it seemed to me, have robbed us of our boy. On inquiry, I learned from the nurse—who, but that she was of the same sex as Adeline, should have tasted my dagger—that in their walks a woman of advanced years, but seemingly of humble rank (that might be disguise), had often stopped, and caressed, and admired the child. I repaired at once to France, sought the old castle of De Courval;—it had passed to the next heir, and the old widow was gone, none knew whither; but it was conjectured, to take the veil in some remote convent.”

“And you never saw her since?”

“Yes, at Rome,” answered Montreal, turning pale: “when last there I chanced suddenly upon her; and then at length I learned my boy's fate, and the truth of my own surmise; she confessed to the theft, and my child was dead! I have not dared to tell Adeline of this; it seems to me as if it would be like plucking the shaft from the wounded side—and she would die at once, bereft of the uncertainty that rankles within her.

She has still a hope—it comforts her; though my heart bleeds when I think on its vanity. Let this pass, my Colonna.”

And Montreal started to his feet, as if he strove, by a strong effort, to shake off the weakness that had crept over him in his narration.

“Think no more of it. Life is short—its thorns are many—let us not neglect any of its flowers. This is piety and wisdom too; Nature, that meant me to struggle and to toil, gave me, happily, the sanguine heart and the elastic soul of France; and I have lived long enough to own that to die young is not an evil. Come, Lord Adrian, let us join my lady ere you part, if part you must; the moon will be up soon, and Fondi is but a short journey hence. You know that though I admire not your Petrarch, you with more courtesy laud our Provençal ballads, and you must hear Adeline sing one that you may prize them the more. The race of the Troubadours is dead, but the minstrelsy survives the minstrel!”

Adrian, who scarce knew what comfort to administer to the affliction of his companion, was somewhat relieved by the change in his mood, though his more grave and sensitive nature was a little startled at its suddenness. But, as we have before seen, Montreal’s spirit (and this made perhaps its fascination) was as a varying and changeful sky; the gayest sunshine and the fiercest storm swept over it in rapid alternation; and elements of singular might and grandeur, which, properly directed and concentrated, would have made him the blessing

and glory of his time, were wielded with a boyish levity, roused into war and desolation, or lulled into repose and smoothness, with all the suddenness of chance, and all the fickleness of caprice.

Sauntering down to the beach, the music of Adeline's lute sounded more distinctly in their ears, and involuntarily they hushed their steps upon the rich and odorous turf, as in a voice, though not powerful, marvellously sweet and clear, and well adapted to the simple fashion of the words and melody, she sang the following stanzas :—

LAY OF THE LADY OF PROVENCE.

I.

“ Ah, why art thou sad, my heart? Why
Darksome and lonely?
Frowns the face of the happy sky
Over thee only?

Ah me, ah me!
Render to joy the earth!
Grief shuns, not envies, Mirth;
But leave one quiet spot,
Where Mirth may enter not,
To sigh, Ah me!—
Ah me!

II.

As a bird, though the sky be clear,
Feels the storm lower,
My soul bodes the tempest near
In the sunny hour;

Ah me, ah me!
Be glad while yet we may!
I bid thee, my heart, be gay;
And still, I know not why,
Thou answerest with a sigh,
(Fond heart!) Ah me!
Ah me!

III.

As this twilight o'er the skies,
Doubt brings the sorrow!
Who knows when the daylight dies,
What waits the morrow?

Ah me, ah me!
Be blithe, be blithe, my lute,
Thy strings will soon be mute.
Be blithe—hark! while it dies,
The note forewarning, sighs
Its last—Ah me!
Ah me!”

“My own Adeline—my sweetest night-bird,” half whispered Montreal, and, softly approaching, he threw himself at his lady's feet—“thy song is too sad for this golden eve.”

“No sound ever went to the heart,” said Adrian, “whose arrow was not feathered by sadness. True sentiment, Montreal, is twin with melancholy, though not with gloom.”

The lady looked softly and approvingly up at Adrian's face; she was pleased with its expression: she was pleased yet more with words of which women rather than men would acknowledge the truth. Adrian returned the look with one of deep and eloquent sympathy and respect; in fact, the short story he had heard from Montreal had interested him deeply in her; and never to the brilliant queen, to whose court he was bound, did his manner wear so chivalric and earnest a homage as it did to that lone and ill-fated lady on the twilight shores of Terracina.

Adeline blushed slightly, and sighed; and then, to break the awkwardness of a pause which had stolen

over them, as Montreal, unheeding the last remark of Adrian, was tuning the strings of the lute, she said—
“Of course the Signor di Castello shares the universal enthusiasm for Petrarch?”

“Ay,” cried Montreal; “my lady is Petrarch mad, like the rest of them: but all I know is, that never did belted knight and honest lover woo in such fantastic and tortured strains.”

“In Italy,” answered Adrian, “common language is exaggeration;—but even your own Troubadour poetry might tell you that love, ever seeking a new language of its own, cannot but often run into what to all but lovers seems distortion and conceit.”

“Come, dear signor,” said Montreal, placing the lute in Adrian’s hands, “let Adeline be the umpire between us, which music—yours or mine—can woo the more blandly.”

“Ah,” said Adrian, laughing, “I fear me, sir knight, you have already bribed the umpire.”

Montreal’s eyes and Adeline’s met; and in that gaze Adeline forgot all her sorrows.

With a practised and skilful hand, Adrian touched the strings; and, selecting a song which was less elaborate than those mostly in vogue amongst his countrymen, though still conceived in the Italian spirit, and in accordance with the sentiment he had previously expressed to Adeline, he sang as follows:—

LOVE’S EXCUSE FOR SADNESS.

“Chide not, beloved, if oft with thee
I feel not rapture wholly;

For aye the heart that's filled with love
 Runs o'er in melancholy.
 To streams that glide in noon, the shade
 From summer skies is given ;
 So, if my breast reflects the cloud,
 'Tis but the cloud of heaven !
 Thine image, glassed within my soul,
 So well the mirror keepeth ;
 That, chide me not, if with the *light*
 The *shadow* also sleepeth."

"And now," said Adrian, as he concluded, "the lute is to you : I but prelude your prize."

The Provençal laughed, and shook his head.—"With any other umpire, I had had my lute broken on my own head, for my conceit in provoking such a rival ; but I must not shrink from a contest I have myself provoked, even though in one day *twice* defeated." And with that, in a deep and exquisitely melodious voice, which wanted only more scientific culture to have challenged any competition, the Knight of St John poured forth

THE LAY OF THE TROUBADOUR.

I.

"Gentle river, the moonbeam is hushed on thy tide,
 On thy pathway of light to my lady I glide.
 My boat, where the stream laves the castle, I moor,—
 All at rest save the maid and her young Troubadour !
 As the stars to the waters that bore
 My bark, to my spirit thou art ;
 Heaving yet, see it bound to the shore,
 So moored to thy beauty my heart,
Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

II.

Wilt thou fly from the world ? It hath wealth for the vain ;
 But Love breaks his bond when there's gold in the chain ;

Wilt thou fly from the world? It hath courts for the proud;—
But Love, born in caves, pines to death in the crowd.

Were this bosom thy world, dearest one,
Thy world could not fail to be bright;
For thou shouldst thyself be its sun,
And what spot could be dim in thy light—

Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie!

III.

The rich and the great woo thee, dearest; and poor,
Though his fathers were princes, thy young Troubadour:
But his heart never quailed save to thee, his adored,—
There's no guile in his lute, and no stain on his sword.

Ah, I reckon not what sorrows I know,
Could I still on thy solace confide;
And I care not, though earth be my foe,
If thy soft heart be found by my side,—

Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie!

IV.

The maiden she blushed, and the maiden she sighed,
Not a cloud in the sky, not a gale on the tide,
But though tempest had raged on the wave and the wind,
That castle, methinks, had been still left behind!

Sweet lily, though bowed by the blast
(To this bosom transplanted) since then,
Wouldst thou change, could we call up the past,
To the rock from thy garden again—

Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie!"

Thus they alternated the time with converse and song, as the wooded hills threw their sharp, long shadows over the sea; while from many a mound of waking flowers, and many a copse of citron and orange, relieved by the dark and solemn aloe, stole the summer breeze, laden with mingled odours; and, over the seas, coloured by the slow-fading hues of purple and rose, that the sun had long bequeathed to the twilight, flitted the gay fireflies that sparkle along that enchanted coast. At length the moon slowly rose

above the dark forest-steeps, gleaming on the gay pavilion and glittering pennon of Montreal—on the verdant sward—the polished mail of the soldiers, stretched on the grass in various groups, half shaded by oaks and cypress, and the war-steeds grazing peaceably together—a wild mixture of the Pastoral and the Iron time.

Adrian, reluctantly reminded of his journey, rose to depart.

“I fear,” said he to Adeline, “that I have already detained you too late in the night air: but selfishness is little considerate.”

“Nay, you see we are prudent,” said Adeline, pointing to Montreal’s mantle, which his provident hand had long since drawn around her form; “but if you must part, farewell, and success attend you!”

“We may meet again, I trust,” said Adrian.

Adeline sighed gently; and the Colonna, gazing on her face by the moonlight, to which it was slightly raised, was painfully struck by its almost transparent delicacy. Moved by his compassion, ere he mounted his steed, he drew Montreal aside—“Forgive me if I seem presumptuous,” said he; “but to one so noble this wild life is scarce a fitting career. I know that, in our time, War consecrates all his children; but surely a settled rank in the court of the emperor, or an honourable reconciliation with your knightly brethren, were better——”

“Than a Tartar camp, and a brigand’s castle,” interrupted Montreal, with some impatience. “This

you were about to say—you are mistaken. Society thrust me from her bosom ; let society take the fruit it hath sown. ‘A fixed rank,’ say you ? some subaltern office, to fight at other men’s command ! You know me not : Walter de Montreal was not formed to obey. War when I will, and rest when I list, is the motto of my escutcheon. Ambition proffers me rewards you wot not of ; and I am of the mould as of the race of those whose swords have conquered thrones. For the rest, your news of the alliance of Louis of Hungary with your Tribune makes it necessary for the friend of Louis to withdraw from all feud with Rome. Ere the week expire, the owl and the bat may seek refuge in yon grey turrets.”

“ But your lady ? ”

“ Is inured to change.—God help her, and temper the rough wind to the lamb ! ”

“ Enough, sir knight ; but should you desire a sure refuge at Rome for one so gentle and so high-born, by the right hand of a knight, I promise a safe roof and an honoured home to the Lady Adeline.”

Montreal pressed the offered hand to his heart ; then plucking his own hastily away, drew it across his eyes, and joined Adeline, in a silence that showed he dared not trust himself to speak. In a few moments Adrian and his train were on the march ; but still the young Colonna turned back, to gaze once more on his wild host and that lovely lady, as they themselves lingered on the moonlit sward, while the sea rippled mournfully on their ears.

It was not many months after that date, that the name of Fra Moreale scattered terror and dismay throughout the fair Campania. The right hand of the Hungarian king, in his invasion of Naples, he was chosen afterwards vicar (or vicegerent) of Louis in Aversa ; and fame and fate seemed to lead him triumphantly along that ambitious career which he had elected, whether bounded by the scaffold or the throne.

BOOK IV.

THE TRIUMPH AND THE POMP.

Allora fama e paura di sì buono reggimento, passa in ogni terra.
—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 21.

Then the fame and the fear of that so good government passed
into every land.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

BOOK IV

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF
HENRY THE SEVENTH
OF ENGLAND
AND
FRANCE
BY
JAMES HALLAM

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

The Boy Angelo.—The Dream of Nina fulfilled.

THE thread of my story transports us back to Rome. It was in a small chamber, in a ruinous mansion, by the base of Mount Aventine, that a young boy sat, one evening, with a woman of a tall and stately form, but somewhat bowed both by infirmity and years. The boy was of a fair and comely presence ; and there was that in his bold, frank, undaunted carriage, which made him appear older than he was.

The old woman, seated in the recess of the deep window, was apparently occupied with a Bible that lay open on her knees ; but ever and anon she lifted her eyes, and gazed on her young companion with a sad and anxious expression.

“ Dame,” said the boy, who was busily employed in hewing out a sword of wood, “ I would you had seen the show to-day. Why, every day is a show at Rome now ! It is show enough to see the Tribune himself

on his white steed (oh, it is so beautiful !)—with his white robes all studded with jewels. But to-day, as I have just been telling you, the Lady Nina took notice of me, as I stood on the stairs of the Capitol: you know, dame, I had donned my best blue velvet doublet.”

“And she called you a fair boy, and asked if you would be her little page; and this has turned thy brain, silly urchin that thou art——”

“But the words are the least: if you saw the Lady Nina, you would own that a smile from her might turn the wisest head in Italy! Oh, how I should like to serve the Tribune! All the lads of my age are mad for him. How they will stare, and envy me at school to-morrow! You know, too, dame, that though I was not always brought up at Rome, I am Roman. Every Roman loves Rienzi.”

“Ay, for the hour: the cry will soon change. This vanity of thine, Angelo, vexes my old heart. I would thou wert humbler.”

“Bastards have their own name to win,” said the boy, colouring deeply. “They twit me in the teeth, because I cannot say who my father and mother were.”

“They need not,” returned the dame, hastily. “Thou comest of noble blood and long descent, though, as I have told thee often, I know not the exact names of thy parents. But what art thou shaping that tough sapling of oak into?”

“A sword, dame, to assist the Tribune against the robbers.”

“Alas ! I fear me, like all those who seek power in Italy, he is more likely to enlist robbers than to assail them.”

“Why, la you there, you live so shut up that you know and hear nothing, or you would have learned that even that fiercest of all the robbers, Fra Moreale, has at length yielded to the Tribune, and fled from his castle, like a rat from a falling house.”

“How, how !” cried the dame ; “what say you ? Has this plebeian, whom you call the Tribune—has he boldly thrown the gage to that dread warrior ? and has Montreal left the Roman territory ?”

“Ay, it is the talk of the town. But Fra Moreale seems as much a bugbear to you as to e’er a mother in Rome. Did he ever wrong you, dame ?”

“Yes !” exclaimed the old woman, with so abrupt a fierceness, that even that hardy boy was startled.

“I wish I could meet him, then,” said he, after a pause, as he flourished his mimic weapon.

“Now Heaven forbid ! He is a man ever to be shunned by thee, whether for peace or war. Say again this good Tribune holds no terms with the free lances.”

“Say it again—why, all Rome knows it.”

“He is pious, too, I have heard : and they do bruit it that he sees visions, and is comforted from above,” said the woman, speaking to herself. Then turning to Angelo, she continued,—“Thou wouldst like greatly to accept the Lady Nina’s proffer ?”

“Ah, that I should, dame, if you could spare me.”

“Child,” replied the matron, solemnly, “my sand

is nearly run, and my wish is to see thee placed with one who will nurture thy young years, and save thee from a life of licence. That done, I may fulfil my vow, and devote the desolate remnant of my years to God. I will think more of this, my child. Not under such a plebeian's roof shouldst thou have lodged, nor from a stranger's board been fed: but at Rome, my last relative worthy of the trust is dead; and at the worst, obscure honesty is better than gaudy crime. Thy spirit troubles me already. Back, my child; I must to my closet, and watch and pray."

Thus saying, the old woman, repelling the advance, and silencing the muttered and confused words, of the boy—half affectionate as they were, yet half tetchy and wayward—glided from the chamber.

The boy looked abstractedly at the closing door, and then said to himself,—“The dame is always talking riddles: I wonder if she know more of me than she tells, or if she is any way akin to me. I hope not, for I don't love her much; nor, for that matter, anything else. I wish she would place me with the Tribune's lady, and then we'll see who among the lads will call Angelo Villani bastard.”

With that the boy fell to work again at his sword with redoubled vigour. In fact, the cold manner of this female, his sole nurse, companion, substitute for parent, had repelled his affections without subduing his temper; and though not originally of evil disposition, Angelo Villani was already insolent, cunning, and revengeful; but not, on the other hand, without a

quick susceptibility to kindness as to affront, a natural acuteness of understanding, and a great indifference to fear. Brought up in quiet affluence rather than luxury, and living much with his protector, whom he knew but by the name of Ursula, his bearing was graceful, and his air that of the well-born. And it was his carriage, perhaps, rather than his countenance, which, though handsome, was more distinguished for intelligence than beauty, which had attracted the notice of the Tribune's bride. His education was that of one reared for some scholastic profession. He was not only taught to read and write, but had been even instructed in the rudiments of Latin. He did not, however, incline to these studies half so fondly as to the games of his companions, or the shows or riots in the street, into all of which he managed to thrust himself, and from which he had always the happy dexterity to return safe and unscathed.

The next morning Ursula entered the young Angelo's chamber. "Wear again thy blue doublet to-day," said she; "I would have thee look thy best. Thou shalt go with me to the palace."

"What, to-day!" cried the boy joyfully, half leaping from his bed. "Dear Dame Ursula, shall I really then belong to the train of the great Tribune's lady?"

"Yes; and leave the old woman to die alone! Your joy becomes you,—but ingratitude is in your blood. Ingratitude! Oh, it has burned my heart into ashes,—and yours, boy, can no longer find a fuel in the dry crumbling cinders."

“Dear dame, you are always so biting. You know you said you wished to retire into a convent, and I was too troublesome a charge for you. But you delight in rebuking me, justly or unjustly.”

“My task is over,” said Ursula, with a deep-drawn sigh.

The boy answered not ; and the old woman retired with a heavy step, and, it may be, a heavier heart. When he joined her in their common apartment, he observed what his joy had previously blinded him to—that Ursula did not wear her usual plain and sober dress. The gold chain, rarely assumed then by women not of noble birth—though, in the other sex, affected also by public functionaries and wealthy merchants—glittered upon a robe of the rich flowered stuffs of Venice, and the clasps that confined the vest at the throat and waist were adorned with jewels of no common price.

Angelo’s eye was struck by the change, but he felt a more manly pride in remarking that the old lady became it well. Her air and mien were indeed those of one to whom such garments were habitual ; and they seemed that day more than usually austere and stately.

She smoothed the boy’s ringlets, drew his short mantle more gracefully over his shoulder, and then placed in his belt a poinard whose handle was richly studded, and a purse well filled with florins.

“Learn to use both discreetly,” said she ; “and, whether I live or die, you will never require to wield the poinard to procure the gold.”

“This, then,” cried Angelo, enchanted, “is a real poinard to fight the robbers with! Ah, with this I should not fear *Fra Moreale*, who wronged thee so. I trust I may yet avenge thee, though thou didst rate me so just now for ingratitude.”

“I *am* avenged. Nourish not such thoughts, my son, they are sinful; at least, I fear so. Draw to the board and eat; we will go betimes, as petitioners should do.”

Angelo had soon finished his morning meal, and, sallying with Ursula to the porch, he saw, to his surprise, four of those servitors who then usually attended persons of distinction, and who were to be hired in every city, for the convenience of strangers or the holiday ostentation of the gayer citizens.

“How grand we are to-day!” said he, clapping his hands with an eagerness which Ursula failed not to reprove.

“It is not for vain show,” she added, “which true nobility can well dispense with, but that we may the more readily gain admittance to the palace. These princes of yesterday are not easy of audience to the over humble.”

“Oh! but you are wrong this time,” said the boy. “The Tribune gives audience to all men, the poorest as the richest. Nay, there is not a ragged boor, or a barefooted friar, who does not win access to him sooner than the proudest baron. That’s why the people love him so. And he devotes one day of the week to receiving the widows and the orphans;—and you know, dame, I am an orphan.”

Ursula, already occupied with her own thoughts, did not answer, and scarcely heard the boy ; but, leaning on his young arm, and preceded by the footmen to clear the way, passed slowly towards the palace of the Capitol.

A wonderful thing would it have been to a more observant eye, to note the change which two or three short months of the stern but salutary and wise rule of the Tribune had effected in the streets of Rome. You no longer beheld the gaunt and mail-clad forms of foreign mercenaries stalking through the vistas, or grouped in lazy insolence before the embattled porches of some gloomy palace. The shops that in many quarters had been closed for years, were again open, glittering with wares and bustling with trade. The thoroughfares, formerly either silent as death, or crossed by some affrighted and solitary passenger with quick steps, and eyes that searched every corner,—or resounding with the roar of a pauper rabble, or the open feuds of savage nobles, now exhibited the regular, and wholesome, and mingled streams of civilised life, whether bound to pleasure or to commerce. Carts and waggons, laden with goods which had passed in safety by the dismantled holds of the robbers of the Campagna, rattled cheerfully over the pathways. “Never, perhaps,”—to use the translation adapted from the Italian authorities, by a modern and by no means a partial historian*—“Never, perhaps, has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden

* Gibbon.

reformation of Rome by the Tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent. 'In this time,' says the historian,* 'did the woods begin to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries;† the roads and inns were replenished with travellers; trade, plenty, and good faith were restored in the markets; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highways.' "

Amidst all these evidences of comfort and security to the people, some dark and discontented countenances might be seen mingled in the crowd, and whenever one who wore the livery of the Colonna or the Orsini felt himself jostled by the throng, a fierce hand moved involuntarily to the sword-belt, and a half-suppressed oath was ended with an indignant sigh. Here and there, too—contrasting the redecorated, refurnished, and smiling shops—heaps of rubbish before the gate of some haughty mansion testified the abasement of fortifications which the owner impotently resented as a sacrilege. Through such streets and such throngs did the party we accompany wend their way, till they found themselves amidst crowds assembled before the entrance of the Capitol. The officers there stationed kept, however, so discreet and dexterous an order, that they were not long detained; and now in

* *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. c. 9.

† Gibbon: the words in the original are, "Li pellegrini cominciaro a fare la cerca per la santuaria."

the broad place or court of that memorable building, they saw the open doors of the great justice-hall, guarded but by a single sentinel, and in which, for six hours daily, did the Tribune hold his court, for, "patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger." *

Not, however, to that hall did the party bend its way, but to the entrance which admitted to the private apartments of the palace. And here the pomp, the gaud, the more than regal magnificence, of the residence of the Tribune, strongly contrasted the patriarchal simplicity which marked his justice court.

Even Ursula, not unaccustomed, of yore, to the luxurious state of Italian and French principalities, seemed roused into surprise at the hall crowded with retainers in costly liveries, the marble and gilded columns wreathed with flowers, and the gorgeous banners wrought with the blended arms of the Republican City and the Pontifical See, which blazed aloft and around.

Scarce knowing whom to address in such an assemblage, Ursula was relieved from her perplexity by an officer attired in a suit of crimson and gold, who, with a grave and formal decorum, which indeed reigned throughout the whole retinue, demanded, respectfully, whom she sought? "The Signora Nina!" replied Ursula, drawing up her stately person, with a natural, though somewhat antiquated, dignity. There was

* Gibbon.

something foreign in the accent, which influenced the officer's answer.

“To-day, madam, I fear that the signora receives only the Roman ladies. To-morrow is that appointed for all foreign dames of distinction.”

Ursula, with a slight impatience of tone, replied—

“My business is of that nature which is welcome on any day, at palaces. I come, signor, to lay certain presents at the signora's feet, which I trust she will deign to accept.”

“And say, signor,” added the boy, abruptly, “that Angelo Villani, whom the Lady Nina honoured yesterday with her notice, is no stranger, but a Roman ; and comes, as she bade him, to proffer to the signora his homage and devotion.”

The grave officer could not refrain a smile at the pert, yet not ungraceful boldness of the boy.

“I remember me, Master Angelo Villani,” he replied, “that the Lady Nina spoke to you by the great staircase. Madam, I will do your errand. Please to follow me to an apartment more fitting your sex and seeming.”

With that the officer led the way across the hall to a broad staircase of white marble, along the centre of which were laid those rich Eastern carpets which at that day, when rushes strewed the chambers of an English monarch, were already common to the greater luxury of Italian palaces. Opening a door at the first flight, he ushered Ursula and her young charge into a lofty antechamber, hung with arras of

wrought velvets; while over the opposite door, through which the officer now vanished, were blazoned the armorial bearings which the Tribune so constantly introduced in all his pomp, not more from the love of show, than from his politic desire to mingle with the keys of the Pontiff the heraldic insignia of the Republic.

“Philip of Valois is not housed like this man!” muttered Ursula. “If this last, I shall have done better for my charge than I recked of.”

The officer soon returned, and led them across an apartment of vast extent, which was indeed the great reception-chamber of the palace. Four-and-twenty columns of the oriental alabaster which had attested the spoils of the later emperors, and had been disinterred from forgotten ruins, to grace the palace of the Reviver of the old Republic, supported the light roof, which, half Gothic, half classic, in its architecture, was inlaid with gilded and purple mosaics. The tessellated floor was covered in the centre with cloth of gold; the walls were clothed, at intervals, with the same gorgeous hangings, relieved by panels freshly painted in the most glowing colours, with mystic and symbolical designs. At the upper end of this royal chamber, two steps ascended to the place of the Tribune’s throne, above which was the canopy wrought with the eternal armorial bearings of the pontiff and the city.

Traversing this apartment, the officer opened the door at its extremity, which admitted to a small

chamber, crowded with pages in rich dresses of silver and blue velvet. There were few amongst them elder than Angelo ; and, from their general beauty, they seemed the very flower and blossom of the city.

Short time had Angelo to gaze on his comrades that were to be :—another minute, and he and his protectress were in the presence of the Tribune's bride.

The chamber was not large—but it was large enough to prove that the beautiful daughter of Raselli had realised her visions of vanity and splendour.

It was an apartment that mocked description—it seemed a cabinet for the gems of the world. The daylight, shaded by high and deep-set casements of stained glass, streamed in a purple and mellow hue over all that the art of that day boasted most precious, or regal luxury held most dear. The candelabras of the silver workmanship of Florence ; the carpets and stuffs of the East ; the draperies of Venice and Genoa ; paintings like the illuminated missals, wrought in gold, and those lost colours of blue and crimson ; antique marbles, which spoke of the bright days of Athens ; tables of disinterred mosaics, their freshness preserved as by magic ; censers of gold that steamed with the odours of Araby, yet so subdued as not to deaden the healthier scent of flowers, which blushed in every corner from their marble and alabaster vases ; a small and spirit-like fountain, which seemed to gush from among wreaths of roses, diffusing in its diamond and fairy spray a scarce felt coolness to the air ;—all these, and such as these, which it were vain work to detail,

congregated in the richest luxuriance, harmonised with the most exquisite taste, uniting the ancient arts with the modern, amazed and intoxicated the sense of the beholder. It was not so much the cost nor the luxury that made the character of the chamber; it was a certain gorgeous and almost sublime fantasy,—so that it seemed rather the fabled retreat of an enchantress, at whose word genii ransacked the earth, and fairies arranged the produce, than the grosser splendour of an earthly queen. Behind the piled cushions upon which Nina half reclined, stood four girls, beautiful as nymphs, with fans of the rarest feathers, and at her feet lay one older than the rest, whose lute, though now silent, attested her legitimate occupation.

But, had the room in itself seemed somewhat too fantastic and overcharged in its prodigal ornaments, the form and face of Nina would at once have rendered all appropriate; so completely did she seem the natural spirit of the place; so wonderfully did her beauty, elated as it now was with contented love, gratified vanity, exultant hope, body forth the brightest vision that ever floated before the eyes of Tasso, when he wrought into one immortal shape the glory of the enchantress with the allurements of the woman.

Nina half rose as she saw Ursula, whose sedate and mournful features involuntarily testified her surprise and admiration at a loveliness so rare and striking, but who, undazzled by the splendour around, soon recovered her wonted self-composure, and seated herself on the cushion to which Nina pointed, while the young visitor

remained standing, and spell-bound by childish wonder, in the centre of the apartment. Nina recognised him with a smile.

“Ah, my pretty boy, whose quick eye and bold air caught my fancy yesterday! Have you come to accept my offer? Is it you, madam, who claim this fair child?”

“Lady,” replied Ursula, “my business here is brief: by a train of events, needless to weary you with narrating, this boy from his infancy fell to my charge—a weighty and anxious trust to one whose thoughts are beyond the barrier of life. I have reared him as became a youth of gentle blood; for on both sides, lady, he is noble, though an orphan, motherless and sireless.”

“Poor child!” said Nina, compassionately.

“Growing now,” continued Ursula, “oppressed by years, and desirous only to make my peace with Heaven, I journeyed hither some months since, in the design to place the boy with a relation of mine, and, that trust fulfilled, to take the vows in the city of the Apostle. Alas! I found my kinsman dead, and a baron of wild and dissolute character was his heir. Here remaining, perplexed and anxious, it seemed to me the voice of Providence when, yester-evening, the child told me you had been pleased to honour him with your notice. Like the rest of Rome, he has already learned enthusiasm for the Tribune—devotion to the Tribune’s bride. Will you, in truth, admit him of your household? He will not dishonour your protection by his blood, nor, I trust, by his bearing.”

“I would take his face for his guarantee, madam, even without so distinguished a recommendation as your own. Is he Roman? His name then must be known to me.”

“Pardon me, lady,” replied Ursula: “he bears the name of Angelo Villani—not that of his sire or mother. The honour of a noble house for ever condemns his parentage to rest unknown. He is the offspring of a love unsanctioned by the Church.”

“He is the more to be loved, then, and to be pitied—victim of sin not his own!” answered Nina, with moistened eyes, as she saw the deep and burning blush that covered the boy’s cheeks. “With the Tribune’s reign commences a new era of nobility, when rank and knighthood shall be won by a man’s own merit—not that of his ancestors. Fear not, madam; in my house he shall know no slight.”

Ursula was moved from her pride by the kindness of Nina; she approached with involuntary reverence, and kissed the signora’s hand—

“May Our Lady reward your noble heart,” said she: “and now my mission is ended, and my earthly goal is won. Add only, lady, to your inestimable favours one more. These jewels”—and Ursula drew from her robe a casket, touched the spring, and the lid flying back, discovered jewels of great size and the most brilliant water,—“these jewels,” she continued, laying the casket at Nina’s feet, “once belonging to the princely house of Thoulouse, are valueless to me and mine. Suffer me to think that they are transferred to one

whose queenly brow will give them a lustre it cannot borrow."

"How!" said Nina, colouring very deeply; "think you, madam, my kindness can be bought? What woman's kindness ever was? Nay, nay—take back the gifts, or I shall pray you to take back your boy."

Ursula was astonished and confounded; to her experience such abstinence was a novelty, and she scarcely knew how to meet it. Nina perceived her embarrassment with a haughty and triumphant smile, and then, regaining her former courtesy of demeanour, said, with a grave sweetness—

"The Tribune's hands are clean,—the Tribune's wife must not be suspected. Rather, madam, should I press upon *you* some token of exchange for the fair charge you have committed to me. Your jewels hereafter may profit the boy in his career; reserve them for one who needs them."

"No, lady," said Ursula, rising and lifting her eyes to heaven; "they shall buy masses for his mother's soul; for him I shall reserve a competence when his years require it. Lady, accept the thanks of a wretched and desolate heart. Fare you well!"

She turned to quit the room, but with so faltering and weak a step, that Nina, touched and affected, sprang up, and with her own hand guided the old woman across the room, whispering comfort and soothing to her; while, as they reached the door, the boy rushed forward, and, clasping Ursula's robe, sobbed out—"Dear dame, not one farewell for your little

Angelo ! Forgive him all he has cost you ! Now, for the first time, I feel how wayward and thankless I have been."

The old woman caught him in her arms, and kissed him passionately ; when the boy, as if a thought suddenly struck him, drew forth the purse she had given him, and said, in a choked and scarce articulate voice,—" And let this, dearest dame, go in masses for my poor *father's* soul ; for *he* is dead, too, you know !"

These words seemed to freeze at once all the tenderer emotions of Ursula. She put back the boy with the same chilling and stern severity of aspect and manner which had so often before repressed him : and, recovering her self-possession, at once quitted the apartment without saying another word. Nina, surprised, but still pitying her sorrow and respecting her age, followed her steps across the pages' anteroom and the reception-chamber, even to the foot of the stairs,—a condescension the haughtiest princess of Rome could not have won from her ; and, returning saddened and thoughtful, she took the boy's hand, and affectionately kissed his forehead.

" Poor boy !" she said, " it seems as if Providence had made me select thee yesterday from the crowd, and thus conducted thee to thy proper refuge. For to whom should come the friendless and the orphans of Rome, but to the palace of Rome's first magistrate ?" Turning then to her attendants, she gave them instructions as to the personal comforts of her new charge, which evinced that if power had ministered to her

vanity it had not steeled her heart. Angelo Villani lived to repay her *well!*

She retained the boy in her presence, and, conversing with him familiarly, she was more and more pleased with his bold spirit and frank manner. Their conversation was, however, interrupted, as the day advanced, by the arrival of several ladies of the Roman nobility. And then it was that Nina's virtues receded into shade, and her faults appeared. She could not resist the woman's triumph over those arrogant signoras who now cringed in homage where they had once slighted with disdain. She affected the manner of, she demanded the respect due to, a queen. And by many of those dexterous arts which the sex know so well, she contrived to render her very courtesy a humiliation to her haughty guests. Her commanding beauty and her graceful intellect saved her, indeed, from the vulgar insolence of the upstart; but yet more keenly stung the pride, by forbidding to those she mortified the retaliation of contempt. Hers were the covert taunt—the smiling affront—the sarcasm in the mask of compliment—the careless exaction of respect in trifles, which could not outwardly be resented, but which could not inly be forgiven.

“Fair day to the Signora Colonna,” said she to the proud wife of the proud Stephen; “we passed your palace yesterday. How fair it now seems, relieved from those gloomy battlements which it must often have saddened you to gaze upon. Signora (turning to one of the Orsini), your lord has high favour with the

Tribune, who destines him to great command. His fortunes are secured, and we rejoice at it ; for no man more loyally serves the state. Have you seen, fair lady of Frangipani, the last verses of Petrarch in honour of my lord ?—they rest yonder. May we so far venture as to request you to point out their beauties to the Signora di Savelli ? We rejoice, noble Lady of Malatesta, to observe that your eyesight is so well restored. The last time we met, though we stood next to you in the revels of the Lady Giulia, you seemed scarce to distinguish us from the pillar by which we stood ?”

“ Must this insolence be endured ?” whispered the Signora Frangipani to the Signora Malatesta.

“ Hush, hush ; if ever it be *our* day again !”

CHAPTER II.

The Blessing of a Councillor whose Interests and Heart are our own.—The Straws thrown upward,—Do they portend a Storm?

It was later that day than usual, when Rienzi returned from his tribunal to the apartments of the palace. As he traversed the reception-hall, his countenance was much flushed; his teeth were set firmly, like a man who has taken a strong resolution from which he will not be moved; and his brow was dark with that settled and fearful frown which the describers of his personal appearance have not failed to notice as the characteristic of an anger the more deadly because invariably just. Close at his heels followed the Bishop of Orvietto and the aged Stephen Colonna. “I tell you, my lords,” said Rienzi, “that ye plead in vain. Rome knows no distinction between ranks. The law is blind to the agent—lynx-eyed to the deed.”

“Yet,” said Raimond, hesitatingly, “bethink thee, Tribune; the nephew of two cardinals, and himself once a senator.”

Rienzi halted abruptly, and faced his companions. “My Lord Bishop,” said he, “does not this make the

crime more inexcusable? Look you, thus it reads :—A vessel from Avignon to Naples, charged with the revenues of Provence to Queen Joanna, on whose cause, mark you, we now hold solemn council, is wrecked at the mouth of the Tiber ; with that, Martino di Porto—a noble, as you say—the holder of that fortress whence he derives his title,—doubly bound by gentle blood and by immediate neighbourhood to succour the oppressed—falls upon the vessel with his troops (what hath the rebel with armed troops ?)—and pillages the vessel like a common robber. He is apprehended—brought to my tribunal—receives fair trial—is condemned to die. Such is the law ;—what more would ye have ?”

“ Mercy,” said the Colonna.

Rienzi folded his arms, and laughed disdainfully. “ I never heard my Lord Colonna plead for mercy when a peasant had stolen the bread that was to feed his famishing children.”

“ Between a peasant and a prince, Tribune, *I*, for one, recognise a distinction :—the bright blood of an Orsini is not to be shed like that of a base plebeian——”

“ Which I remember me,” said Rienzi, in a low voice, “ you deemed small matter enough when my boy-brother fell beneath the wanton spear of your proud son. Wake not that memory, I warn you : let it sleep. For shame, old Colonna—for shame ; so near the grave, where the worm levels all flesh, and preaching, with those grey hairs, the uncharitable distinction

between man and man. Is there not distinction enough at the best? Does not one wear purple, and the other rags? Hath not one ease, and the other toil? Doth not the one banquet while the other starves? Do I nourish any mad scheme to level the ranks which society renders a necessary evil? No. I war no more with Dives than with Lazarus. But before man's judgment-seat, as before God's, Lazarus and Dives are made equal. No more."

Colonna drew his robe round him with great haughtiness, and bit his lip in silence. Raimond interposed.

"All this is true, Tribune. But," and he drew Rienzi aside, "you know we must be politic as well as just. Nephew to two cardinals, what enmity will not this provoke at Avignon?"

"Vex not yourself, holy Raimond, I will answer it to the pontiff." While they spoke the bell tolled heavily and loudly.

Colonna started.

"Great Tribune," said he, with a slight sneer, "deign to pause ere it be too late. I know not that I ever before bent to you a suppliant; and I ask you now to spare mine own foe. Stephen Colonna prays Cola di Rienzi to spare the life of an Orsini."

"I understand thy taunt, old lord," said Rienzi, calmly, "but I resent it not. You are foe to the Orsini, yet you plead for him—it sounds generous; but hark you,—you are more a friend to your order than a foe to your rival. You cannot bear that one, great enough to have contended with you, should perish

like a thief. I give full praise to such noble forgiveness ; but I am no noble, and I do not sympathise with it. One word more :—if this were the sole act of fraud and violence that this bandit baron had committed, your prayers should plead for him ; but is not his life notorious ? Has he not been from boyhood the terror and disgrace of Rome ? How many matrons violated, merchants pillaged, peaceful men stilettoed in the daylight, rise in dark witness against the prisoner ? And for such a man do I live to hear an aged prince and a pope's vicar plead for mercy ? Fie, fie ! But I will be even with ye. The next *poor* man whom the law sentences to death, for your sake will I pardon."

Raimond again drew aside the Tribune, while Colonna struggled to suppress his rage.

"My friend," said the bishop, "the nobles will feel this as an insult to their whole order ; the very pleading of Orsini's worst foe must convince thee of this. Martino's blood will seal their reconciliation with each other, and they will be as one man against thee."

"Be it so : with God and the people on my side, I will dare, though a Roman, to be just. The bell ceases—you are already too late." So saying, Rienzi threw open the casement ; and by the staircase of the "Lion" rose a gibbet, from which swung with a creaking sound, arrayed in his patrician robes, the yet palpitating corpse of Martino di Porto.

"Behold !" said the Tribune, sternly, "thus die all robbers. For *traitors*, the same law has the axe and the scaffold !"

Raimond drew back and turned pale. Not so the veteran noble. Tears of wounded pride started from his eyes ; he approached, leaning on his staff, to Rienzi, touched him on his shoulder, and said—

“ Tribune, a judge has lived to envy his victim ! ”

Rienzi turned with an equal pride to the baron.

“ We forgive idle words in the aged. My lord, have you done with us ?—we would be alone.”

“ Give me thy arm, Raimond,” said Stephen. “ Tribune, farewell. Forget that the Colonna sued thee,—an easy task, methinks, for, wise as you are, you forget what every one else can remember.”

“ Ay, my lord, what ? ”

“ Birth, Tribune, birth—that’s all ! ”

“ The Signor Colonna has taken up my old calling, and turned a wit,” returned Rienzi, with an indifferent and easy tone.

Then following Raimond and Stephen with his eyes till the door closed upon them, he muttered, “ Insolent ! were it not for Adrian, thy grey beard should not bear thee harmless. Birth ! what Colonna would not boast himself, if he could, the grandson of an emperor ? Old man, there is danger in thee which must be watched.” With that he turned musingly towards the casement, and again that grisly spectacle of death met his eye. The people below, assembled in large concourse, rejoiced at the execution of one whose whole life had been infamy and rapine—but who had seemed beyond justice—with all the fierce clamour that marks the exultation of the rabble over a crushed foe. And where

Rienzi stood, he heard the shouts of "Long live the Tribune, the just judge, Rome's liberator!" But at that time other thoughts deafened his senses to the popular enthusiasm.

"My poor brother!" he said, with tears in his eyes, "it was owing to this man's crimes—and to a crime almost similar to that for which he has now suffered—that thou wert entrained to the slaughter; and they who had no pity for the lamb, clamour for compassion to the wolf! Ah, wert thou living now, how these proud heads would bend to thee; though dead, thou were not worthy of a thought. God rest thy gentle soul, and keep my ambition pure as it was when we walked at twilight, side by side together!"

The Tribune shut the casement, and turning away sought the chamber of Nina. On hearing his step without, she had already risen from the couch, her eyes sparkling, her bosom heaving; and as he entered, she threw herself on his neck, and murmured as she nestled to his breast—"Ah, the hours since we parted!"

It was a singular thing to see that proud lady, proud of her beauty, her station, her new honours;—whose gorgeous vanity was already the talk of Rome, and the reproach to Rienzi,—how suddenly and miraculously she seemed changed in his presence! Blushing and timid, all pride in herself seemed merged in her proud love for him. No woman ever loved to the full extent of the passion, who did not venerate where she loved, and who did not feel humbled (delighted in that

humility) by her exaggerated and overweening estimate of the superiority of the object of her worship.

And it might be the consciousness of this distinction between himself and all other created things, which continued to increase the love of the Tribune to his bride, to blind him to her failings towards others, and to indulge her in a magnificence of parade, which, though to a certain point politic to assume, was carried to an extent which, if it did not conspire to produce his downfall, has served the Romans with an excuse for their own cowardice and desertion, and historians with a plausible explanation of causes they had not the industry to fathom. Rienzi returned his wife's caresses with an equal affection, and bending down to her beautiful face, the sight was sufficient to chase from his brow the emotions, whether severe or sad, which had lately darkened its broad expanse.

"Thou hast not been abroad this morning, Nina!"

"No, the heat was oppressive. But nevertheless, Cola, I have not lacked company—half the matronage of Rome has crowded the palace."

"Ah, I warrant it.—But yon boy, is he not a new face?"

"Hush, Cola, speak to him kindly, I entreat: of his story anon. Angelo, approach. You see your new master, the Tribune of Rome."

Angelo approached with a timidity not his wont, for an air of majesty was at all times natural to Rienzi, and since his power it had naturally taken a graver and austerer aspect, which impressed those who approached

him, even the ambassadors of princes, with a certain involuntary awe. The Tribune smiled at the effect he saw he had produced, and, being by temper fond of children, and affable to all but the great, he hastened to dispel it. He took the child affectionately in his arms, kissed him, and bade him welcome.

“May we have a son as fair!” he whispered to Nina, who blushed, and turned away.

“Thy name, my little friend?”

“Angelo Villani.”

“A Tuscan name. There is a man of letters at Florence, doubtless writing our annals from hearsay at this moment, called Villani. Perhaps akin to thee?”

“I have no kin,” said the boy, bluntly; “and therefore I shall the better love the signora and honour you, if you will let me. I am Roman—all the Roman boys honour Rienzi.”

“Do they, my brave lad?” said the Tribune, colouring with pleasure; “that is a good omen of my continued prosperity.” He put down the boy, and threw himself on the cushions, while Nina placed herself on a kind of low stool beside him.

“Let us be alone,” said he; and Nina motioned to the attendant maidens to withdraw.

“Take my new page with you,” said she; “he is yet, perhaps, too fresh from home to enjoy the company of his giddy brethren.”

When they were alone, Nina proceeded to relate to Rienzi the adventure of the morning; but though he seemed outwardly to listen, his gaze was on vacancy,

and he was evidently abstracted and self-absorbed. At length, as she concluded, he said, "Well, Nina, you have acted as ever, kindly and nobly. Let us to other themes. I am in danger."

"Danger!" echoed Nina, turning pale.

"Why, the word must not appal you—you have a spirit like mine, that scorns fear; and, for that reason, Nina, in all Rome you are my only confidant. It was not only to glad me with thy beauty, but to cheer me with thy counsel, to support me with thy valour, that Heaven gave me thee as a helpmate."

"Now, Our Lady bless thee for those words!" said Nina, kissing the hand that hung over her shoulder: "and if I started at the word danger, it was but the woman's thought of thee,—an unworthy thought, my Cola, for glory and danger go together. And I am as ready to share the last as the first. If the hour of trial ever come, none of thy friends shall be so faithful to thy side as this weak form but undaunted heart."

"I know it, my own Nina; I know it," said Rienzi, rising, and pacing the chamber with large and rapid strides. "Now listen to me. Thou knowest that to govern in safety, it is my policy as my pride to govern justly. To govern justly is an awful thing, when mighty barons are the culprits. Nina, for an open and audacious robbery, our court has sentenced Martin of the Orsini, the Lord of Porto, to death. His corpse swings now on the Staircase of the Lion."

"A dreadful doom!" said Nina, shuddering.

"True; but by his death thousands of poor and

honest men may live in peace. It is not that which troubles me : the barons resent the deed, as an insult to them that law should touch a noble. They will rise—they will rebel. I foresee the storm—not the spell to allay it.”

Nina paused a moment,—“They have taken,” she then said, “a solemn oath on the Eucharist not to bear arms against thee.”

“Perjury is a light addition to theft and murder,” answered Rienzi, with his sarcastic smile.

“But the people are faithful.”

“Yes, but in a civil war (which the saints forefend !) those combatants are the stanchest who have no home but their armour, no calling but the sword. The trader will not leave his trade at the toll of a bell every day ; but the barons’ soldiery are ready at all hours.”

“To be strong,” said Nina,—who, summoned to the councils of her lord, showed an intellect not unworthy of the honour,—“to be strong in dangerous times, authority must *seem* strong. By showing no fear, you may prevent the cause of fear.”

“My own thought !” returned Rienzi, quickly. “You know that half my power with these barons is drawn from the homage rendered to me by foreign states. When from every city in Italy the ambassadors of crowned princes seek the alliance of the Tribune, they must veil their resentment at the rise of the plebeian. On the other hand, to be strong abroad I must seem strong at home : the vast design I have planned, and, as by a miracle, begun to execute, will fail at once

if it seem abroad to be intrusted to an unsteady and fluctuating power. That design," continued Rienzi, pausing, and placing his hand on a marble bust of the young Augustus, "is greater than his, whose profound yet icy soul united Italy in subjection,—for it would unite Italy in freedom;—yes! could we but form one great federative league of all the States of Italy, each governed by its own laws, but united for mutual and common protection against the Attilas of the North, with Rome for their Metropolis and their Mother, this age and this brain would have wrought an enterprise which men should quote till the sound of the last trump!"

"I know thy divine scheme," said Nina, catching his enthusiasm; "and what if there be danger in attaining it? Have we not mastered the greatest danger in the first step?"

"Right, Nina, right! Heaven"—and the Tribune, who ever recognised in his own fortunes the agency of the hand above, crossed himself reverently—"will preserve him to whom it hath vouchsafed such lofty visions of the future redemption of the Land of the true Church, and the liberty and advancement of its children! This I trust: already many of the cities of Tuscany have entered into treaties for the formation of this league; nor from a single tyrant, save John di Vico, have I received ought but fair words and flattering promises. The time seems ripe for the grand stroke of all."

"And what is that?" demanded Nina, wonderingly.

“Defiance to all foreign interference. By what right does a synod of stranger princes give Rome a king in some Teuton emperor? Rome’s people alone should choose Rome’s governor;—and shall we cross the Alps to render the title of our master to the descendants of the Goth?”

Nina was silent: the custom of choosing the sovereign by a diet beyond the Rhine, reserving only the ceremony of his subsequent coronation for the mock assent of the Romans, however degrading to that people, and however hostile to all notions of substantial independence, was so unquestioned at that time, that Rienzi’s daring suggestion left her amazed and breathless, prepared as she was for any scheme, however extravagantly bold.

“How!” said she, after a long pause; “do I understand aright? Can you mean defiance to the emperor?”

“Why, listen: at this moment there are two pretenders to the throne of Rome—to the imperial crown of Italy—a Bohemian and a Bavarian. To their election our assent—Rome’s assent—is not requisite—not asked. Can we be called free—can we boast ourselves republican—when a stranger and a barbarian is thus thrust upon our necks? No, we will be free in reality as in name. Besides,” continued the Tribune, in a calmer tone, “this seems to me politic as well as daring. The people incessantly demand wonders from me: how can I more nobly dazzle, more virtuously win them, than by asserting their inalienable right to choose their

own rulers? The daring will awe the barons, and foreigners themselves; it will give a startling example to all Italy; it will be the first brand of a universal blaze. It shall be done, and with a pomp that befits the deed!"

"Cola," said Nina, hesitatingly, "your eagle spirit often ascends where mine flags to follow; yet be not over bold."

"Nay, did you not, a moment since, preach a different doctrine? To be strong, was I not to seem strong?"

"May fate preserve you!" said Nina, with a foreboding sigh.

"Fate!" cried Rienzi; "there is *no* fate! Between the thought and the success, God is the only agent; and," he added, with a voice of deep solemnity, "I shall not be deserted. Visions by night, even while thine arms are around me; omens and impulses, stirring and divine, by day, even in the midst of the living crowd—encourage my path, and point my goal. Now, even now, a voice seems to whisper in my ear—'Pause not; tremble not; waver not; for the eye of the All-seeing is upon thee, and the hand of the All-powerful shall protect!'"

As Rienzi thus spoke, his face grew pale, his hair seemed to bristle, his tall and proud form trembled visibly, and presently he sunk down on a seat, and covered his face with his hands.

An awe crept over Nina, though not unaccustomed to such strange and preternatural emotions, which ap-

peared yet the more singular in one who in common life was so calm, stately, and self-possessed. But with every increase of prosperity and power, those emotions seemed to increase in their fervour, as if in such increase the devout and overwrought superstition of the Tribune recognised additional proof of a mysterious guardianship mightier than the valour or art of man.

She approached fearfully, and threw her arms around him, but without speaking.

Ere yet the Tribune had well recovered himself, a slight tap at the door was heard, and the sound seemed at once to recall his self-possession.

“Enter,” he said, lifting his face, to which the wonted colour slowly returned.

An officer, half opening the door, announced that the person he had sent for waited his leisure.

“I come!—Core of my heart” (he whispered to Nina), “we will sup alone to-night, and will converse more on these matters:” so saying, with somewhat less than his usual loftiness of mien, he left the room, and sought his cabinet, which lay at the other side of the reception chamber. Here he found Cecco del Vecchio.

“How, my bold fellow,” said the Tribune, assuming with wonderful ease that air of friendly equality which he always adopted with those of the lower class, and which made a striking contrast with the majesty, no less natural, which marked his manner to the great. “How now, my Cecco! Thou bearest thyself bravely, I see, during these sickly heats; we labourers—for

both of us labour, Cecco—are too busy to fall ill as the idle do, in the summer, or the autumn, of Roman skies. I sent for thee, Cecco, because I would know how thy fellow-craftsmen are like to take the Orsini's execution."

"Oh ! Tribune," replied the artificer, who, now familiarised with Rienzi, had lost much of his earlier awe of him, and who regarded the Tribune's power as partly his own creation ; " they are already out of their honest wits, at your courage in punishing the great men as you would the small."

"So ;—I am repaid ! But hark you, Cecco, it will bring, perhaps, hot work upon us. Every baron will dread lest it be his turn next, and dread will make them bold, like rats in despair. We may have to fight for the Good Estate."

"With all my heart, Tribune," answered Cecco, gruffly. "I, for one, am no craven."

"Then keep the same spirit in all your meetings with the artificers. I fight for the people. The people at a pinch must fight with me."

"They will," replied Cecco ; "they will !"

"Cecco, this city is under the spiritual dominion of the pontiff—so be it—it is an honour, not a burthen. But the *temporal* dominion, my friend, should be with Romans only. Is it not a disgrace to Republican Rome, that while we now speak, certain barbarians, whom we never heard of, should be deciding beyond the Alps on the merits of two sovereigns, whom we never saw ? Is not this a thing to be resisted ? An

Italian city,—what hath it to do with a Bohemian emperor ? ”

“ Little eno’, St Paul knows ! ” said Cecco.

“ Should it not be a claim questioned ? ”

“ I think so ! ” replied the smith.

“ And if found an outrage on our ancient laws, should it not be a claim resisted ? ”

“ Not a doubt of it.”

“ Well, go to ! The archives assure me that never was emperor lawfully crowned but by the free votes of the people. *We* never chose Bohemian or Bavarian.”

“ But, on the contrary, whenever these Northmen come hither to be crowned, we try to drive them away with stones and curses,—for we are a people, Tribune, that love our liberties.”

“ Go back to your friends—see—address them, say that your Tribune will demand of these pretenders to Rome the right to her throne. Let them not be mazed or startled, but support me when the occasion comes.”

“ I am glad of this,” quoth the huge smith ; “ for our friends have grown a little unruly of late, and say——”

“ What do they say ? ”

“ That it is true you have expelled the banditti, and curb the barons, and administer justice fairly——”

“ Is not that miracle enough for the space of some two or three short months ? ”

“ Why, they say it would have been more than enough in a noble ; but you, being raised from the peo-

ple, and having such gifts and so forth, might do yet more. It is now three weeks since they have had any new thing to talk about; but Orsini's execution to-day will cheer them a bit."

"Well, Cecco, well," said the Tribune, rising, "they shall have more anon to feed their mouths with. So you think they love me not quite so well as they did some three weeks back?"

"I say not so," answered Cecco. "But we Romans are an impatient people."

"Alas, yes!"

"However, they will no doubt stick close enough to you; provided, Tribune, you don't put any new tax upon them."

"Ha! But if, in order to be free, it be necessary to fight—if to fight, it be necessary to have soldiers, why then the soldiers must be paid: won't the people contribute something to their own liberties;—to just laws, and safe lives?"

"I don't know," returned the smith, scratching his head as if a little puzzled; "but I know that poor men won't be overtaxed. They say they are better off with you than with the barons before, and therefore they love you. But men in business, Tribune, poor men with families, must look to their bellies. Only one man in ten goes to law—only one man in twenty is butchered by a baron's brigand; but every man eats, and drinks, and feels a tax."

"This cannot be your reasoning, Cecco!" said Rienzi, gravely.

“Why, Tribune, I am an honest man, but I have a large family to rear.”

“Enough; enough!” said the Tribune, quickly; and then he added abstractedly as to himself, but aloud—“Methinks we have been too lavish; these shows and spectacles should cease.”

“What!” cried Cecco; “what, Tribune!—would you deny the poor fellows a holiday? They work hard enough, and their only pleasure is seeing your fine shows and processions: and then they go home and say,—‘See, *our* man beats all the barons! what state he keeps!’”

“Ah! they blame not my splendour, then!”

“Blame it; no! Without it they would be ashamed of you, and think the Buono Stato but a shabby concern.”

“You speak bluntly, Cecco, but perhaps wisely. The saints keep you! Fail not to remember what I told you!”

“No, no. It is a shame to have an emperor thrust upon us;—so it is. Good evening, Tribune.”

Left alone, the Tribune remained for some time plunged in gloomy and foreboding thoughts.

“I am in the midst of a magician’s spell,” said he; if I desist, the fiends tear me to pieces. What I have begun, that must I conclude. But this rude man shows me too well with what tools I work. For *me* failure is nothing. I have already climbed to a greatness which might render giddy many a born prince’s brain. But with my fall—Rome, Italy, Peace, Justice, Civilisation—all fall back into the abyss of ages!”

He rose; and after once or twice pacing his apart-

ment, in which from many a column gleamed upon him the marble effigies of the great of old, he opened the casement to inhale the air of the now declining day.

The Place of the Capitol was deserted save by the tread of the single sentinel. But still, dark and fearful, hung from the tall gibbet the clay of the robber noble; and the colossal shape of the Egyptian lion rose hard by, sharp and dark in the breathless atmosphere.

“Dread statue!” thought Rienzi, “how many unwhispered and solemn rites hast thou witnessed by thy native Nile, ere the Roman’s hand transferred thee hither—the antique witness of Roman crimes! Strange! but when I look upon thee I feel as if thou hadst some mystic influence over my own fortunes. Beside thee was I hailed the republican lord of Rome; beside thee are my palace, my tribunal, the place of my justice, my triumphs, and my pomp; to thee my eyes turn from my bed of state; and if fated to die in power and peace, thou mayst be the last object my eyes will mark! Or if myself a victim——” He paused—shrank from the thought presented to him—turned to a recess of the chamber—drew aside a curtain, that veiled a crucifix and a small table, on which lay a Bible and the monastic emblems of the skull and cross-bones—emblems, indeed, grave and irresistible, of the nothingness of power, and the uncertainty of life. Before these sacred monitors, whether to humble or to elevate, knelt that proud and aspiring man; and when he rose, it was with a lighter step and more cheerful mien than he had worn that day.

CHAPTER III.

The Actor Unmasked.

“IN intoxication,” says the proverb, “men betray their real characters.” There is a no less honest and truth-revealing intoxication in prosperity than in wine. The varnish of power brings forth at once the defects and the beauties of the human portrait.

The unprecedented and almost miraculous rise of Rienzi from the rank of the pontiff's official to the Lord of Rome, would have been accompanied with a yet greater miracle, if it had not somewhat dazzled and seduced the object it elevated. When, as in well-ordered states and tranquil times, men rise slowly, step by step, they accustom themselves to their growing fortunes. But the leap of an hour from a citizen to a prince—from the victim of oppression to the dispenser of justice—is a transition so sudden as to render dizzy the most sober brain. And, perhaps, in proportion to the imagination, the enthusiasm, the genius of the man, will the suddenness be dangerous—excite too extravagant a hope—and lead to too chimerical an ambition. The qualities that made him rise, hurry him to his fall; and victory at the Marengo of his fortunes, urges him to destruction at its Moscow.

In his greatness Rienzi did not so much acquire new qualities, as develop in brighter light and deeper shadow those which he had always exhibited. On the one hand he was just—resolute—the friend of the oppressed—the terror of the oppressor. His wonderful intellect illumined everything it touched. By rooting out abuse, and by searching examination and wise arrangement, he had trebled the revenues of the city without imposing a single new tax. Faithful to his idol of liberty, he had not been betrayed by the wish of the people into despotic authority ; but had, as we have seen, formally revived, and established with new powers, the Parliamentary Council of the city. However extensive his own authority, he referred its exercise to the people ; in their name he alone declared himself to govern, and he never executed any signal action without submitting to them its reasons or its justification. No less faithful to his desire to restore prosperity as well as freedom to Rome, he had seized the first dazzling epoch of his power to propose that great federative league with the Italian states which would, as he rightly said, have raised Rome to the indisputable head of European nations. Under his rule trade was secure, literature was welcome, art began to rise.

On the other hand, the prosperity which made more apparent his justice, his integrity, his patriotism, his virtues, and his genius, brought out no less glaringly his arrogant consciousness of superiority, his love of display, and the wild and daring insolence of his ambi-

tion. Though too just to avenge himself by retaliating on the patricians their own violence, though, in his troubled and stormy tribuneship, not one unmerited or illegal execution of baron or citizen could be alleged against him, even by his enemies; yet sharing less excusably the weakness of Nina, he could not deny his proud heart the pleasure of humiliating those who had ridiculed him as a buffoon, despised him as a plebeian, and who, even now, slaves to his face, were cynics behind his back. "They stood before him while he sat," says his biographer; "all these barons, bare-headed; their hands crossed on their breasts; their looks downcast;—oh, how frightened they were!"—a picture more disgraceful to the servile cowardice of the nobles than the haughty sternness of the Tribune. It might be that he deemed it policy to break the spirit of his foes, and to awe those whom it was a vain hope to conciliate.

For his pomp there was a greater excuse: it was the custom of the time; it was the insignia and witness of power; and when the modern historian taunts him with not imitating the simplicity of an ancient Tribune, the sneer betrays an ignorance of the spirit of the age, and the vain people whom the chief magistrate was to govern. No doubt his gorgeous festivals, his solemn processions, set off and ennobled—if parade can be so ennobled—by a refined and magnificent richness of imagination, associated always with popular emblems, and designed to convey the idea of rejoicing for Liberty Restored, and to assert the

state and majesty of Rome Revived—no doubt these spectacles, however otherwise judged in a more enlightened age and by closet sages, served greatly to augment the importance of the Tribune abroad, and to dazzle the pride of a fickle and ostentatious populace. And taste grew refined, luxury called labour into requisition, and foreigners from all states were attracted by the splendour of a court over which presided, under republican names, two sovereigns,* young and brilliant, the one renowned for his genius, the other eminent for her beauty. It was, indeed, a dazzling and royal dream in the long night of Rome, spoiled of her pontiff and his voluptuous train—that holiday reign of Cola di Rienzi ! And often afterwards it was recalled with a sigh, not only by the poor for its justice, the merchant for its security, but the gallant for its splendour, and the poet for its ideal and intellectual grace !

As if to show that it was not to gratify the more vulgar appetite and desire, in the midst of all his pomp, when the board groaned with the delicacies of every clime, when the wine most freely circled, the

* Rienzi, speaking in one of his letters of his great enterprise, refers it to the ardour of youth. The exact date of his birth is unknown ; but he was certainly a young man at the time now referred to. His portrait in the Museo Barberino, from which his description has been already taken in the first book of this work, represents him as beardless, and, as far as one can judge, somewhere above thirty—old enough, to be sure, to have a beard ; and seven years afterwards he wore a long one, which greatly displeased his *naïve* biographer, who seems to consider it a sort of crime. The head is very remarkable for its stern beauty, and little, if at all, inferior to that of Napoleon ; to which, as I have before remarked, it has some resemblance in expression, if not in feature.

Tribune himself preserved a temperate and even rigid abstinence.* While the apartments of state and the chamber of his bride were adorned with a profuse luxury and cost, to his own private rooms he transported precisely the same furniture which had been familiar to him in his obscurer life. The books, the busts, the reliefs, the arms which had inspired him heretofore with the visions of the past, were endeared by associations which he did not care to forego.

But that which constituted the most singular feature of his character, and which still wraps all around him in a certain mystery, was his religious enthusiasm. The daring but wild doctrines of Arnold of Brescia, who, two centuries anterior, had preached reform, but inculcated mysticism, still lingered in Rome, and had in earlier youth deeply coloured the mind of Rienzi; and as I have before observed, his youthful propensity to dreamy thought, the melancholy death of his brother, his own various but successful fortunes, had all contributed to nurse the more zealous and solemn aspirations of this remarkable man. Like Arnold of Brescia, his faith bore a strong resemblance to the intense fanaticism of our own Puritans of the Civil War, as if similar political circumstances conduced to similar religious sentiments. He believed himself inspired by awful and mighty commune with beings of the better world. Saints and angels ministered to his dreams; and without this, the more profound and

* “Vita di Cola di Rienzi.”—The biographer praises the abstinence of the *Tribune*.

hallowed enthusiasm, he might never have been sufficiently emboldened by mere human patriotism, to his unprecedented enterprise : it was the secret of much of his greatness,—many of his errors. Like all men who are thus self-deluded by a vain but not inglorious superstition, united with, and coloured by, earthly ambition, it is impossible to say how far he was the visionary, and how far at times he dared to be the impostor. In the ceremonies of his pageants, in the ornaments of his person, were invariably introduced mystic and figurative emblems. In times of danger he publicly professed to have been cheered and directed by divine dreams ; and on many occasions the prophetic warnings he announced having been singularly verified by the event, his influence with the people was strengthened by a belief in the favour and intercourse of Heaven. Thus, delusion of self might tempt and conduce to imposition on others, and he might not scruple to avail himself of the advantage of seeming what he believed himself to be. Yet, no doubt this intoxicating credulity pushed him into extravagance unworthy of, and strangely contrasted by, his soberer intellect, and made him disproportion his vast ends to his unsteady means, by the proud fallacy, that where man failed, God would interpose. Cola di Rienzi was no faultless hero of romance. In him lay, in conflicting prodigality, the richest and most opposite elements of character ; strong sense, visionary superstition, an eloquence and energy that mastered all he approached, a blind enthusiasm that mastered himself ; luxury and

abstinence, sternness and susceptibility, pride to the great, humility to the low ; the most devoted patriotism and the most avid desire of personal power. As few men undertake great and desperate designs without strong animal spirits, so it may be observed, that with most who have risen to eminence over the herd, there is an aptness, at times, to a wild mirth and an elasticity of humour which often astonish the more sober and regulated minds, that are “the commoners of life ;” and the theatrical grandeur of Napoleon, the severe dignity of Cromwell, are strangely contrasted by a frequent, nor always seasonable buffoonery, which it is hard to reconcile with the ideal of their characters, or the gloomy and portentous interest of their careers. And this, equally a trait in the temperament of Rienzi, distinguished his hours of relaxation, and contributed to that marvellous versatility with which his harder nature accommodated itself to all humours and all men. Often from his austere judgment-seat, he passed to the social board an altered man ; and even the sullen barons who reluctantly attended his feasts, forgot his public greatness in his familiar wit : albeit this reckless humour could not always refrain from seeking its subject in the mortification of his crestfallen foes—a pleasure it would have been wiser and more generous to forego. And perhaps it was, in part, the prompting of this sarcastic and unbridled humour that made him often love to astonish as well as to awe. But even this gaiety, if so it may be called, taking an appearance of familiar frankness, served much to ingratiate him

with the lower orders ; and, if a fault in the prince, was a virtue in the demagogue.

To these various characteristics, now fully developed, the reader must add a genius of designs so bold, of conceptions so gigantic and august, conjoined with that more minute and ordinary ability which masters details ; that with a brave, noble, intelligent, devoted people to back his projects, the accession of the Tribune would have been the close of the thralldom of Italy, and the abrupt limit of the dark age of Europe. With such a people, his faults would have been insensibly checked, his more unwholesome power have received a sufficient curb. Experience familiarising him with power, would have gradually weaned him from extravagance in its display ; and the active and masculine energy of his intellect would have found field for the more restless spirits, as his justice gave shelter to the more tranquil. Faults he had, but whether those faults or the faults of the people were to prepare his downfall, is yet to be seen.

Meanwhile, amidst a discontented nobility and a fickle populace, urged on by the danger of repose to the danger of enterprise ; partly blinded by his outward power, partly impelled by the fear of internal weakness ; at once made sanguine by his genius and his fanaticism, and uneasy by the expectations of the crowd,—he threw himself headlong into the gulf of the rushing Time, and surrendered his lofty spirit to no other guidance than a conviction of its natural buoyancy and its heaven-directed haven.

CHAPTER IV.

The Enemy's Camp.

WHILE Rienzi was preparing, in concert, perhaps, with the ambassadors of the brave Tuscan States, whose pride of country and love of liberty were well fitted to comprehend, and even share them, his schemes for the emancipation from all foreign yoke of the Ancient Queen, and the Everlasting Garden, of the World ; the barons, in restless secrecy, were revolving projects for the restoration of their own power.

One morning, the heads of the Savelli, the Orsini, and the Frangipani, met at the disfortified palace of Stephen Colonna. Their conference was warm and earnest—now resolute, now wavering in its object—as indignation or fear prevailed.

“ You have heard,” said Luca di Savelli, in his usual soft and womanly voice, “ that the Tribune has proclaimed, that, the day after to-morrow, he will take the order of knighthood, and watch the night before in the church of the Lateran : he has honoured me with a request to attend his vigil.”

“ Yes, yes, the knave. What means this new fantasy ?” said the brutal Prince of the Orsini.

"Unless it be to have the cavalier's right to challenge a noble," said old Colonna, "I cannot conjecture. Will Rome never grow weary of this madman?"

"Rome is the more mad of the two," said Luca di Savelli; but methinks, in his wildness, the Tribune hath committed one error of which we may well avail ourselves at Avignon."

"Ah," cried the old Colonna, "that must be our game; passive here, let us fight at Avignon."

"In a word, then, he hath ordered that his bath shall be prepared in the holy porphyry vase in which once bathed the Emperor Constantine."

"Profanation! profanation!" cried Stephen. "This is enough to excuse a bull of excommunication. The pope shall hear of it. I will despatch a courier forthwith."

"Better wait and see the ceremony," said the Savelli: "some greater folly will close the pomp, be assured."

"Hark ye, my masters," said the grim Lord of the Orsini; "ye are for delay and caution; I for promptness and daring; my kinsman's blood calls aloud, and brooks no parley."

"And what do?" said the soft-voiced Savelli; "fight without soldiers, against twenty thousand infuriated Romans? not I."

Orsini sank his voice into a meaning whisper. "In Venice," said he, "this upstart might be mastered without an army. Think you in Rome no man wears a stiletto!"

"Hush!" said Stephen, who was of far nobler and

better nature than his compeers, and who, justifying to himself all other resistance to the Tribune, felt his conscience rise against assassination ; “this must not be—your zeal transports you.”

“Besides, whom can we employ ? scarce a German left in the city ; and to whisper this to a Roman were to exchange places with poor Martino—Heaven take him, for he’s nearer heaven than ever he was before,” said the Savelli.

“Jest me no jests,” cried the Orsini, fiercely. “Jests on such a subject ! By St Francis, I would, since thou lovest such wit, thou hadst it all to thyself ; and, methinks, at the Tribune’s board I have seen thee laugh at his rude humour, as if thou didst not require a cord to choke thee.”

“Better to laugh than to tremble ?” returned the Savelli.

“How, darest thou say I tremble ?” cried the baron.

“Hush, hush,” said the veteran Colonna, with impatient dignity. “We are not now in such holiday times as to quarrel amongst ourselves. Forbear, my lords.”

“Your greater prudence, signor,” said the sarcastic Savelli, “arises from your greater safety. Your house is about to shelter itself under the Tribune’s ; and when the Lord Adrian returns from Naples, the innkeeper’s son will be brother to your kinsman.”

“You might spare me that taunt,” said the old noble, with some emotion. “Heaven knows how bitterly I have chafed at the thought ; yet I would Adrian were with us. His word goes far to moderate the Tribune,

and to guide my own course, for my passion beguiles my reason; and since his departure, methinks we have been the more sullen without being the more strong. Let this pass. If my own son had wed the Tribune's sister, I would yet strike a blow for the old constitution as becomes a noble, if I but saw that the blow would not cut off my own head."

Savelli, who had been whispering apart with Rinaldo Frangipani, now said—

"Noble prince, listen to me. You are bound by your kinsman's approaching connection, your venerable age, and your intimacy with the pontiff, to a greater caution than we are. Leave to us the management of the enterprise, and be assured of our discretion."

A young boy, Stefanello, who afterwards succeeded to the representation of the direct line of the Colonna, and whom the reader will once again encounter ere our tale be closed, was playing by his grandsire's knees. He looked sharply up at Savelli, and said, "My grandfather is too wise, and you are too timid. Frangipani is too yielding, and Orsini is too like a vexed bull. I wish I were a year or two older."

"And what would you do, my pretty censurer?" said the smooth Savelli, biting his smiling lip.

"Stab the Tribune with my own stiletto, and then hey for Palestrina!"

"The egg will hatch a brave serpent," quoth the Savelli. "Yet why so bitter against the Tribune, my cockatrice?"

"Because he allowed an insolent mercer to arrest

my uncle Agapet for debt. The debt had been owed these ten years ; and though it is said that no house in Rome has owed more money than the Colonna, this is the first time I ever heard of a rascally creditor being allowed to claim his debt unless with doffed cap and bended knee. And I say that I would not live to be a baron if such upstart insolence is to be put upon me."

"My child," said old Stephen, laughing heartily, "I see our noble order will be safe enough in your hands."

"And," continued the child, emboldened by the applause he received, "if I had time after pricking the Tribune, I would fain have a second stroke at——"

"Whom?" said the Savelli, observing the boy pause.

"My cousin Adrian. Shame on him, for dreaming to make one a wife whose birth would scarce fit her for a Colonna's leman!"

"Go play, my child—go play," said the old Colonna, as he pushed the boy from him. "Enough of this babble," cried the Orsini, rudely. "Tell me, old lord; just as I entered I saw an old friend (one of your former mercenaries) quit the palace—may I crave his errand?"

"Ah, yes ; a messenger from Fra Moreale. I wrote to the knight, reproving him for his desertion on our ill-starred return from Corneto, and intimating that five hundred lances would be highly paid for just now."

"Ah," said Savelli ; "and what is his answer!"

"Oh, wily and evasive. He is profuse in compliments and good wishes ; but says he is under fealty to the Hungarian king, whose cause is before Rienzi's tribunal ; that he cannot desert his present standard ;

that he fears Rome is so evenly balanced between patricians and the people, that whatever party would permanently be uppermost must call in a Podesta; and this character alone, the Provençal insinuates would suit him."

"Montreal our Podesta?" cried the Orsini.

"And why not?" said Savelli; as good a well-born Podesta as a low-born Tribune? But I trust we may do without either. Colonna, has this messenger from Fra Moreale left the city?"

"I suppose so."

"No," said Orsini; "I met him at the gate, and knew him of old: it is Rodolf the Saxon (once a hireling of the Colonna), who has made some widows among my clients in the good old day. He is a little disguised now; however, I recognised and accosted him, for I thought he was one who might yet become a friend, and I bade him await me at my palace."

"You did well," said the Savelli, musing, and his eyes met those of Orsini. Shortly afterwards a conference, in which much was said and nothing settled, was broken up; but Luca di Savelli, loitering at the porch, prayed the Frangipani, and the other barons, to adjourn to the Orsini's palace.

"The old Colonna," said he, "is well-nigh in his dotage. We shall come to a quick determination without him, and we can secure his proxy in his son."

And this was a true prophecy, for half an hour's consultation with Rodolf of Saxony sufficed to ripen thought into enterprise.

CHAPTER V.

The Night and its Incidents.

WITH the following twilight, Rome was summoned to the commencement of the most magnificent spectacle the imperial city had witnessed since the fall of the Cæsars. It had been a singular privilege, arrogated by the people of Rome, to confer upon their citizens the order of knighthood. Twenty years before, a Colonna and an Orsini had received this popular honour. Rienzi, who designed it as the prelude to a more important ceremony, claimed from the Romans a similar distinction. From the Capitol to the Lateran swept, in long procession, all that Rome boasted of noble, of fair, and brave. First went horsemen without number, and from all the neighbouring parts of Italy, in apparel that well befitted the occasion. Trumpeters, and musicians of all kinds, followed, and the trumpets were of silver; youths bearing the harness of the knightly war-steed, wrought with gold, preceded the march of the loftiest matronage of Rome, whose love for show, and it may be, whose admiration for triumphant fame (which to women sanctions many offences) made them forget the humbled greatness of their lords: amidst

them Nina and Irene, outshining all the rest ; then came the Tribune and the pontiff's vicar, surrounded by all the great signors of the city, smothering alike resentment, revenge, and scorn, and struggling who should approach nearest to the monarch of the day. The high-hearted old Colonna alone remained aloof, following at a little distance, and in a garb studiously plain. But his age, his rank, his former renown in war and state, did not suffice to draw to his grey locks and high-born mien a single one of the shouts that attended the meanest lord on whom the great Tribune smiled. Savelli followed nearest to Rienzi, the most obsequious of the courtly band ; immediately before the Tribune came two men ; the one bore a drawn sword, the other the *pendone*, or standard usually assigned to royalty. The Tribune himself was clothed in a long robe of white satin, whose snowy dazzle (*miri candoris*) is peculiarly dwelt on by the historian, richly decorated with gold ; while on his breast were many of those mystic symbols I have before alluded to, the exact meaning of which was perhaps known only to the wearer. In his dark eye, and on that large tranquil brow, in which thought seemed to sleep, as sleeps a storm, there might be detected a mind abstracted from the pomp around ; but ever and anon he roused himself, and conversed partially with Raymond or Savelli.

“This is a quaint game,” said the Orsini, falling back to the old Colonna : “but it may end tragically.”

“Methinks it may,” said the old man, “if the Tribune overhear thee.”

Orsini grew pale. "How—nay—nay, even if he did, he never resents words, but professes to laugh at our spoken rage. It was but the other day that some knave told him what one of the Annibaldi said of him—words for which a true cavalier would have drawn the speaker's life's blood; and he sent for the Annibaldi, and said, 'My friend, receive this purse of gold,—court wits should be paid.'"

"Did Annibaldi take the gold?"

"Why, no; the Tribune was pleased with his spirit, and made him sup with him; and Annibaldi says he never spent a merrier evening, and no longer wonders that his kinsman, Riccardo, loves the buffoon so."

Arrived now at the Lateran, Luca di Savelli fell also back, and whispered to Orsini; the Frangipani, and some other of the nobles, exchanged meaning looks; Rienzi, entering the sacred edifice in which, according to custom, he was to pass the night watching his armour, bade the crowd farewell, and summoned them the next morning, "To hear things that might, he trusted, be acceptable to heaven and earth."

The immense multitude received this intimation with curiosity and gladness, while those who had been in some measure prepared by Cecco del Vecchio, hailed it as an omen of their Tribune's unflagging resolution. The concourse dispersed with singular order and quietness; it was recorded as a remarkable fact, that in so great a crowd, composed of men of all parties, none exhibited licence or indulged in quarrel. Some of the barons and cavaliers, among whom was Luca di Savelli,

whose sleek urbanity and sarcastic humour found favour with the Tribune, and a few subordinate pages and attendants, alone remained ; and, save a single sentinel at the porch, that broad space before the palace, the Basilica and Fount of Constantine, soon presented a silent and desolate void to the melancholy moonlight. Within the church, according to the usage of the time and rite, the descendant of the Teuton kings received the order of the Santo Spirito. His pride, or some superstition equally weak, though more excusable, led him to bathe in the porphyry vase which an absurd legend consecrated to Constantine ; and this, as Savelli predicted, cost him dear. These appointed ceremonies concluded, his arms were placed in that part of the church within the columns of St John. And here his state bed was prepared.*

The attendant barons, pages, and chamberlains, retired out of sight to a small side chapel in the edifice ; and Rienzi was left alone. A single lamp, placed beside his bed, contended with the mournful rays of the moon, that cast through the long casements, over aisle and pillar, its “ dim religious light.” The sanctity of the place, the solemnity of the hour, and the solitary silence round, were well calculated to deepen the high wrought and earnest mood of that son of fortune. Many and high fancies swept over his mind—now of worldly aspirations, now of more august but visionary

* In a more northern country, the eve of knighthood would have been spent without sleeping. In Italy, the ceremony of watching the armour does not appear to have been so rigidly observed.

belief, till at length, wearied with his own reflections, he cast himself on the bed. It was an omen which graver history has not neglected to record, that the moment he pressed the bed, new prepared for the occasion, part of it sank under him : he himself was affected by the accident, and sprang forth, turning pale and muttering ; but, as if ashamed of his weakness, after a moment's pause, again composed himself to rest, and drew the drapery round him.

The moonbeams grew fainter and more faint as the time proceeded, and the sharp distinction between light and shade faded fast from the marble floor ; when from behind a column at the furthest verge of the building, a strange shadow suddenly crossed the sickly light—it crept on—it moved, but without an echo,—from pillar to pillar it flitted—it rested at last behind the column nearest to the Tribune's bed—it remained stationary.

The shades gathered darker and darker round : the stillness seemed to deepen ; the moon was gone ; and, save from the struggling ray of the lamp beside Rienzi, the blackness of night closed over the solemn and ghostly scene.

In one of the side chapels, as I have before said, which, in the many alterations the church has undergone, is probably long since destroyed, were Savelli and the few attendants retained by the Tribune. Savelli alone slept not ; he remained sitting erect, breathless and listening, while the tall lights in the chapel rendered yet more impressive the rapid changes of his countenance.

“Now pray Heaven,” said he, “the knave miscarry not! Such an occasion may never again occur! He has a strong arm and a dexterous hand, doubtless; but the other is a powerful man. The deed once done, I care not whether the doer escape or not; if not, why we must stab him! Dead men tell no tales. At the worst, who can avenge Rienzi? There is no other Rienzi! Ourselves and the Frangipani seize the Aventine, the Colonna and the Orsini the other quarters of the city; and without the master-spirit, we may laugh at the mad populace. But if discovered;——” and Savelli, who fortunately for his foes, had not nerves equal to his will, covered his face and shuddered;——“I think I hear a noise!—no—is it the wind?—tush, it must be old Vico de Scotto, turning in his shell of mail!—silent—I like not that silence! No cry—no sound! Can the ruffian have played us false? or could he not scale the casement? It is but a child’s effort;—or did the sentry spy him?”

Time passed on: the first ray of daylight slowly gleamed, when he thought he heard the door of the church close. Savelli’s suspense became intolerable: he stole from the chapel, and came in sight of the Tribune’s bed—all was silent.

“Perhaps the silence of death,” said Savelli, as he crept back.

Meanwhile the Tribune, vainly endeavouring to close his eyes, was rendered yet more watchful by the uneasy position he was obliged to assume—for the part of the bed towards the pillow having given way, while the

rest remained solid, he had inverted the legitimate order of lying, and drawn himself up as he might best accommodate his limbs, towards the foot of the bed. The light of the lamp, though shaded by the draperies, was thus opposite to him. Impatient of his wakefulness, he at last thought it was this dull and flickering light which scared away the slumber, and was about to rise, to remove it further from him, when he saw the curtain at the other end of the bed gently lifted: he remained quiet and alarmed:—ere he could draw a second breath, a dark figure interposed between the light and the bed; and he felt that a stroke was aimed against that part of the couch, which, but for the accident that had seemed to him ominous, would have given his breast to the knife. Rienzi waited not a second and better-directed blow; as the assassin yet stooped, groping in the uncertain light, he threw on him all the weight and power of his large and muscular frame, wrenched the stiletto from the bravo's hand, and dashing him on the bed, placed his knee on his breast. The stiletto rose—gleamed—descended—the murderer swerved aside, and it pierced only his right arm. The Tribune raised, for a deadlier blow, the revengeful blade.

The assassin thus foiled was a man used to all form and shape of danger, and he did not now lose his presence of mind.

“Hold!” said he; “if you kill me, you will die yourself. Spare me, and I will save *you*.”

“Miscreant!”

“Hush—not so loud, or you will disturb your attendants, and some of them may do what I have failed to execute. Spare me, I say, and I will reveal that which were worth more than my life; but call not—speak not aloud, I warn you!”

The Tribune felt his heart stand still: in that lonely place, afar from his idolising people—his devoted guards—with but loathing barons, or, it might be, faithless menials, within call, might not the baffled murderer give a wholesome warning?—and those words and that doubt seemed suddenly to reverse their respective positions, and leave the conqueror still in the assassin’s power.

“Thou thinkest to deceive me,” said he, but in a voice whispered and uncertain, which showed the rufian the advantage he had gained: “thou wouldst that I might release thee without summoning my attendants, that thou mightst a second time attempt my life.”

“Thou hast disabled my right arm, and disarmed me of my only weapon.”

“How camest thou hither?”

“By connivance.”

“Whence this attempt?”

“The dictation of others.”

“If I pardon thee——”

“Thou shalt know all!”

“Rise,” said the Tribune, releasing his prisoner, but with great caution, and still grasping his shoulder with one hand, while the other pointed the dagger at his throat.

“Did my sentry admit thee? There is but one entrance to the church, methinks.”

“He did not; follow me, and I will tell thee more.”

“Dog! thou hast accomplices?”

“If I have, thou hast the knife at my throat.”

“Wouldst thou escape?”

“I cannot, or I would.”

Rienzi looked hard, by the dull light of the lamp, at the assassin. His rugged and coarse countenance, rude garb, and barbarian speech, seemed to him proof sufficient that he was but the hireling of others; and it might be wise to brave one danger present and certain, to prevent much danger future and unforeseen. Rienzi, too, was armed, strong, active, in the prime of life;—and, at the worst, there was no part of the building whence his voice would not reach those within the chapel—if they could be depended upon.

“Show me, then, thy place and means of entrance,” said he; “and if I but suspect thee as we move—thou diest. Take up the lamp.”

The ruffian nodded; with his left hand took up the lamp as he was ordered; and with Rienzi’s grasp on his shoulder, while the wound from his right arm dropped gore as he passed, he moved noiselessly along the church—gained the altar—to the left of which was a small room for the use or retirement of the priest. To this he made his way. Rienzi’s heart misgave him a moment.

“Beware,” he whispered, “the least sign of fraud, and thou art the first victim!”

The assassin nodded again, and proceeded. They entered the room; and then the Tribune's strange guide pointed to an open casement. "Behold my entrance," said he; "and, if you permit me, my egress——"

"The frog gets not out of the well so easily as he came in, friend," returned Rienzi, smiling. "And now, if I am not to call my guards, what am I to do with thee?"

"Let me go, and I will seek thee to-morrow; and if thou payest me handsomely, and promisest not to harm limb or life, I will put thine enemies and my employers in thy power."

Rienzi could not refrain from a slight laugh at the proposition, but composing himself, replied—"And what if I call my attendants, and give thee to their charge?"

"Thou givest me to those very enemies and employers; and in despair lest I betray them, ere the day dawn they cut my throat—or thine."

"Methinks, knave, I have seen thee before?"

"Thou hast. I blush not for name or country. I am Rodolf of Saxony!"

"I remember me;—servitor of Walter de Montreal. He, then, is thy instigator!"

"Roman, no! That noble knight scorns other weapon than the open sword, and his own hand slays his own foes. Your pitiful, miserable, dastard Italians, alone employ the courage, and hire the arm, of others."

Rienzi remained silent. He had released hold of

his prisoner, and stood facing him, every now and then regarding his countenance, and again relapsing into thought. At length, casting his eyes round the small chamber thus singularly tenanted, he observed a kind of closet, in which the priests' robes, and some articles used in the sacred service, were contained. It suggested at once an escape from his dilemma: he pointed to it—

“There, Rodolf of Saxony, shalt thou pass some part of this night—a small penance for thy meditated crime; and to-morrow, as thou lookest for life, thou wilt reveal all.”

“Hark ye, Tribune,” returned the Saxon, doggedly, “my liberty is in your power, but neither my tongue nor my life. If I consent to be caged in that hole, you must swear on the crossed hilt of the dagger that you now hold, that, on confession of all I know, you pardon and set me free. My employers are enough to glut your rage an’ you were a tiger. If you do not swear this——”

“Ah, my modest friend!—the alternative?”

“I brain myself against the stone wall! Better such a death than the rack!”

“Fool, I want not revenge against such as thou. Be honest, and I swear that, twelve hours after thy confession, thou shalt stand safe and unscathed without the walls of Rome. So help me our Lord and his saints.”

“I am content!—*Donner und Hagel*, I have lived long enough to care only for my own life, and the great

captain's next to it ;—for the rest, I reckon not if ye southerners cut each other's throats, and make all Italy one grave."

With this benevolent speech, Rodolf entered the closet ; but ere Rienzi could close the door, he stepped forth again——

"Hold," said he : "this blood flows fast. Help me to bandage it, or I shall bleed to death ere my confession."

"*Per fede*," said the Tribune, his strange humour enjoying the man's cool audacity ; "but, considering the service thou wouldst have rendered me, thou art the most pleasant, forbearing, unabashed, good fellow, I have seen this many a year. Give us thine own belt. I little thought my first eve of knighthood would have been so charitably spent !"

"Methinks these robes would make a better bandage," said Rodolf, pointing to the priests' gear suspended from the wall.

"Silence, knave," said the Tribune, frowning ; "no sacrilege ! Yet, as thou takest such dainty care of thyself, thou shalt have mine own scarf to accommodate thee."

With that the Tribune, placing his dagger on the ground, while he cautiously guarded it with his foot, bound up the wounded limb, for which condescension Rodolf gave him short thanks ; resumed his weapon and lamp ; closed the door ; drew over it the long, heavy bolt without, and returned to his couch, deeply and indignantly musing over the treason he had so fortunately escaped.

At the first grey streak of dawn he went out of the great door of the church, called the sentry, who was one of his own guard, and bade him privately, and now ere the world was astir, convey the prisoner to one of the private dungeons of the Capitol. "Be silent," said he : "utter not a word of this to any one ; be obedient, and thou shalt be promoted. This done, find out the councillor, Pandulfo di Guido, and bid him seek me here ere the crowd assemble."

He then, making the sentinel doff his heavy shoes of iron, led him across the church, resigned Rodolf to his care, saw them depart, and in a few minutes afterwards his voice was heard by the inmates of the neighbouring chapel ; and he was soon surrounded by his train.

He was already standing on the floor, wrapped in a large gown lined with furs : and his piercing eye scanned carefully the face of each man that approached. Two of the barons of the Frangipani family exhibited some tokens of confusion and embarrassment, from which they speedily recovered at the frank salutation of the Tribune.

But all the art of Savelli could not prevent his features from betraying to the most indifferent eye the terror of his soul :—and, when he felt the penetrating gaze of Rienzi upon him, he trembled in every joint. Rienzi alone did not, however, seem to notice his disorder ; and when Vico di Scotto, an old knight, from whose hands he received his sword, asked him how he had passed the night, he replied, cheerfully—

"Well, well—my brave friend ! Over a maiden

knight some good angel always watches. Signor Luca di Savelli, I fear you have slept but ill : you seem pale. No matter !—our banquet to-day will soon brighten the current of your gay blood.”

“Blood, Tribune !” said Di Scotto, who was innocent of the plot ; “thou sayest blood, and lo ! on the floor are large gouts of it not yet dry.”

“Now, out on thee, old hero, for betraying my awkwardness ! I pricked myself with my own dagger in unrobing. Thank Heaven, it hath no poison in its blade !”

The Frangipani exchanged looks—Luca di Savelli clung to a column for support—and the rest of the attendants seemed grave and surprised.

“Think not of it, my masters,” said Rienzi : “it is a good omen, and a true prophecy. It implies that he who girds on his sword for the good of the state, must be ready to spill his blood for it : that am I. No more of this—a mere scratch : it gave more blood than I recked of from so slight a puncture, and saves the leech the trouble of the lancet. How brightly breaks the day ! We must prepare to meet our fellow-citizens—they will be here anon. Ha, my Pandulfo—welcome ! thou, my old friend, shalt buckle on this mantle !”

And while Pandulfo was engaged in the task, the Tribune whispered a few words in his ear, which, by the smile on his countenance, seemed to the attendants one of the familiar jests with which Rienzi distinguished his intercourse with his more confidential intimates.

CHAPTER VI.

The Celebrated Citation.

THE bell of the great Latern church sounded shrill and loud, as the mighty multitude, greater even than that of the preceding night, swept on. The appointed officers made way with difficulty for the barons and ambassadors, and scarcely were those noble visitors admitted ere the crowd closed in their ranks, poured headlong into the church, and took the way to the chapel of Boniface VIII. There filling every cranny, and blocking up the entrance, the more fortunate of the press beheld the Tribune surrounded by the splendid court his genius had collected, and his fortune had subdued. At length, as the solemn and holy music began to swell through the edifice, preluding the celebration of the mass, the Tribune stepped forth, and the hush of the music was increased by the universal and dead silence of the audience. His height, his air, his countenance, were such as always command the attention of crowds; and at this time they received every adjunct from the interest of the occasion, and that peculiar look of intent yet suppressed fervour, which is, perhaps, the sole gift of the eloquent that Nature alone can give.

“Be it known,” said he, slowly and deliberately, “in virtue of that authority, power, and jurisdiction, which the Roman people, in general parliament, have assigned to us, and which the sovereign pontiff hath confirmed, that we, not ungrateful of the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit—whose soldier we now are—nor of the favour of the Roman people, declare, that Rome, capital of the world, and base of the Christian Church; and that every City, State, and People of Italy, are henceforth free. By that freedom, and in the same consecrated authority, we proclaim, that the election, jurisdiction, and monarchy of the Roman empire appertain to Rome and Rome’s people, and the whole of Italy. We cite, then, and summon personally, the illustrious princes, Louis Duke of Bavaria, and Charles King of Bohemia, who would style themselves Emperors of Italy, to appear before us, or the other magistrates of Rome, to plead and to prove their claim, between this day and the Day of Pentecost. We cite also, and within the same term, the Duke of Saxony, the Prince of Brandenburg, and whosoever else, potentate, prince, or prelate, asserts the right of Elector to the imperial throne—a right that, we find it chronicled from ancient and immemorial time, appertaineth only to the Roman people—and this, in vindication of our civil liberties, without derogation of the spiritual power of the Church, the pontiff, and the sacred college.* Herald, proclaim

* “Il tutto senza derogare all’ autorità della Chiesa, del Papa e del Sacro Collegio.” So concludes this extraordinary citation, this

the citation, at the greater and more formal length, as written and intrusted to your hands, without the Lateran."

As Rienzi concluded this bold proclamation of the liberties of Italy, the Tuscan ambassadors, and those of some other of the free states, murmured low appro-

bold and wonderful assertion of the classic independence of Italy, in the most feudal time of the fourteenth century. The anonymous biographer of Rienzi declares that the Tribune cited also the pope and the cardinals to reside in Rome. De Sade powerfully and incontrovertibly refutes this addition to the daring or the extravagance of Rienzi. Gibbon, however, who has rendered the rest of the citation in terms more abrupt and discourteous than he was warranted by any authority, copies the biographer's blunder, and sneers at De Sade, as using arguments "rather of decency than of weight." Without wearying the reader with all the arguments of the learned abbé, it may be sufficient to give the first two.

1st. All the other contemporaneous historians that have treated of this event, G. Villani, Hocsemius, the Vatican MSS., and other chroniclers, relating the citation of the emperor and electors, say nothing of that of the pope and cardinals; and the pope (Clement VI.), in his subsequent accusations of Rienzi, while very bitter against his citation of the emperor, is wholly silent on what would have been to the pontiff the much greater offence of citing himself and the cardinals.

2d. The literal act of this citation, as published formally in the Lateran, is extant in Hocsemius (whence is borrowed, though not in all its length, the speech in the text of our present tale); and in this document the pope and his cardinals are *not* named in the summons.

Gibbon's whole account of Rienzi is superficial and unfair. To the cold and sneering scepticism, which so often deforms the gigantic work of that great writer, allowing nothing for that sincere and urgent enthusiasm which, whether of liberty or religion, is the most common parent of daring action, the great Roman seems but an ambitious and fantastic madman. In Gibbon's hands what would Cromwell have been? what Vane? what Hampden? The pedant Julian, with his dirty person and pompous affectation, was Gibbon's ideal of a great man.

bation. The ambassadors of those states that affected the party of the emperor looked at each other in silent amaze and consternation. The Roman barons remained with mute lips and downcast eyes ; only over the aged face of Stephen Colonna settled a smile, half of scorn, half of exultation. But the great mass of the citizens were caught by words that opened so grand a prospect as the emancipation of all Italy ; and their reverence of the Tribune's power and fortune was almost that due to a supernatural being ; so that they did not pause to calculate the means which were to correspond with the boast.

While his eye roved over the crowd, the gorgeous assemblage near him, the devoted throng beyond ;—as on his ear boomed the murmur of thousands and ten thousands, in the space without, from before the palace of Constantine (palace now his own!) sworn to devote life and fortune to his cause ; in the flush of prosperity that yet had known no check ; in the zenith of power, as yet unconscious of reverse, the heart of the Tribune swelled proudly : visions of mighty fame and limitless dominion,—fame and dominion, once his beloved Rome's, and by him to be restored, rushed before his intoxicated gaze ; and in the delirious and passionate aspirations of the moment, he turned his sword alternately to the three quarters of the then known globe, and said, in an abstracted voice, as a man in a dream, “In the right of the Roman people *this* too is mine!”*

Low though the voice, the wild boast was heard by

* “Questo e mio.”

all around as distinctly as if borne to them in thunder. And vain it were to describe the various sensations it excited; the extravagance would have moved the derision of his foes, the grief of his friends, but for the manner of the speaker, which, solemn and commanding, hushed for the moment even reason and hatred themselves in awe; afterwards remembered and repeated, void of the spell they had borrowed from the utterer, the words met the cold condemnation of the well-judging; but at that moment all things seemed possible to the hero of the people. He spoke as one inspired—they trembled and believed: and, as rapt from the spectacle, he stood a moment silent, his arm still extended—his dark dilating eye fixed upon space—his lip parted—his proud head towering and erect above the herd,—his own enthusiasm kindled that of the more humble and distant spectators; and there was a deep murmur begun by one, echoed by the rest, “The Lord is with Italy and Rienzi!”

The Tribune turned, he saw the pope’s vicar astonished, bewildered, rising to speak. His sense and foresight returned to him at once, and, resolved to drown the dangerous disavowal of the papal authority for this hardihood, which was ready to burst from Raimond’s lips, he motioned quickly to the musicians, and the solemn and ringing chant of the sacred ceremony prevented the Bishop of Orvietto all occasion of self-exoneration or reply.

The moment the ceremony was over, Rienzi touched the bishop, and whispered, “We will explain this to

your liking. You feast with us at the Lateran.—Your arm.” Nor did he leave the good bishop’s arm, nor trust him to other companionship, until to the stormy sound of horn and trumpet, drum and cymbal, and amidst such a concourse as might have hailed, on the same spot, the legendary baptism of Constantine, the Tribune and his nobles entered the great gates of the Lateran, then the palace of the world.

Thus ended that remarkable ceremony and that proud challenge of the Northern Powers, in behalf of the Italian liberties, which, had it been afterwards successful, would have been deemed a sublime daring; which, unsuccessful, has been construed by the vulgar into a frantic insolence; but which, calmly considering all the circumstances that urged on the Tribune, and all the power that surrounded him, was not, perhaps, altogether so imprudent as it seemed. And, even accepting that imprudence in the extremest sense,—by the more penetrating judge of the higher order of character it will probably be considered as the magnificent folly of a bold nature, excited at once by position and prosperity, by religious credulities, by patriotic aspirings, by scholastic visions too suddenly transferred from reverie to action, beyond that wise and earthward policy which sharpens the weapon ere it casts the gauntlet.

CHAPTER VII.

The Festival.

THE festival of that day was far the most sumptuous hitherto known. The hint of Cecco del Vecchio, which so well depicted the character of his fellow-citizens, as yet it exists, though not to such excess, in their love of holiday pomp and gorgeous show, was not lost upon Rienzi. One instance of the universal banqueting (intended, indeed, rather for the people than the higher ranks) may illustrate the more than royal profusion that prevailed. From morn till eve, streams of wine flowed like a fountain from the nostrils of the horse of the great equestrian statue of Constantine. The mighty halls of the Lateran palace, open to all ranks, were prodigally spread; and the games, sports, and buffooneries of the time, were in ample requisition. Apart, the Tribunessa, as Nina was rather unclassically entitled, entertained the dames of Rome; while the Tribune had so effectually silenced or conciliated Raimond, that the good bishop shared his peculiar table—the only one admitted to that honour. As the eye ranged each saloon and hall, it beheld the space lined with all the nobility and knighthood—the wealth and strength—the learning

and the beauty—of the Italian metropolis ; mingled with ambassadors and noble strangers, even from beyond the Alps ;*—envoys not only of the free states that had welcomed the rise of the Tribune, but of the high-born and haughty tyrants who had first derided his arrogance, and now cringed to his power. There were not only the ambassadors of Florence, of Sienna, of Arezzo (which last subjected its government to the Tribune) of Todi, of Spoleto, and of countless other lesser towns and states, but of the dark and terrible Visconti, Prince of Milan ; of Obizzo of Ferrara, and the tyrant rulers of Verona and Bologna ; even the proud and sagacious Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, whose arm afterwards broke for a while the power of Montreal, at the head of his Great Company, had deputed his representative in his most honoured noble. John di Vico, the worst and most malignant despot of his day, who had sternly defied the arms of the Tribune, now subdued and humbled, was there in person ; and the ambassadors of Hungary and of Naples mingled with those of Bavaria and of Bohemia, whose sovereigns that day had been cited to the Roman Judgment Court. The nodding of plumes, the glitter of jewels and cloth of gold, the rustling of silks and jingle of golden spurs, the waving of banners from the roof, the sounds of minstrelsy from the galleries above, all presented a picture of such power and state—a court and chivalry of such show—as the greatest of the feudal kings might

* The simple and credulous biographer of Rienzi declares his fame to have reached the ears of the Soldan of Babylon.

have beheld with a sparkling eye and a swelling heart. But at that moment the cause and lord of all that splendour, recovered from his late exhilaration, sat moody and abstracted, remembering with a thoughtful brow the adventure of the past night, and sensible that amongst his gaudiest revellers lurked his intended murderers. Amidst the swell of the minstrelsy and the pomp of the crowd, he felt that treason scowled beside him; and the image of the skeleton obtruding, as of old, its grim thought of death upon the feast, darkened the ruby of the wine, and chilled the glitter of the scene.

It was while the feast was loudest that Rienzi's page was seen gliding through the banquet, and whispering several of the nobles; each bowed low, but changed colour as he received the message.

"My Lord Savelli," said Orsini, himself trembling, "bear yourself more bravely. This must be meant in honour, not revenge. I suppose your summons corresponds with mine."

"He—he—asks—asks—me to supper at the Capitol; a fri—endly meeting (pest on his friendship!)—after the noise of the day."

"The words addressed also to me!" said Orsini, turning to one of the Frangipani.

Those who received the summons soon broke from the feast, and collected in a group, eagerly conferring. Some were for flight, but flight was confession; their number, rank, long and consecrated impunity, reassured them, and they resolved to obey. The old Colonna, the sole innocent baron of the invited guests, was also

the only one who refused the invitation. "Tush!" said he, peevishly; "here is feasting enough for one day! Tell the Tribune that ere he sups I hope to be asleep. Grey hairs cannot encounter all this fever of festivity."

As Rienzi rose to depart, which he did early, for the banquet took place while yet morning, Raimond, eager to escape and confer with some of his spiritual friends as to the report he should make to the pontiff, was beginning his expressions of farewell, when the merciless Tribune said to him, gravely—

"My lord, we want you on urgent business at the Capitol. A prisoner—a trial—perhaps," he added, with his portentous and prophetic frown, "an *execution* waits us! Come."

"Verily, Tribune," stammered the good bishop, "this is a strange time for execution!"

"Last night was a time yet more strange. Come."

There was something in the way in which the final word was pronounced, that Raimond could not resist. He sighed, muttered, twitched his robes, and followed the Tribune. As he passed through the halls, the company rose on all sides. Rienzi repaid their salutations with smiles and whispers of frank courtesy and winning address. Young as he yet was, and of a handsome and noble presence, that took every advantage from splendid attire, and yet more from an appearance of intellectual command in his brow and eye, which the less cultivated signors of that dark age necessarily wanted—he glittered through the court as one worthy to form, and fitted to

preside over, it ; and his supposed descent from the Teuton emperor, which, since his greatness, was universally bruited and believed abroad, seemed undeniably visible to the foreign lords in the majesty of his mien and the easy blandness of his address.

“ My lord prefect,” said he, to a dark and sullen personage in black velvet, the powerful and arrogant John di Vico, prefect of Rome, “ we are rejoiced to find so noble a guest at Rome : we must repay the courtesy by surprising you in your own palace ere long ;—nor will you, signor,” as he turned to the envoy from Tivoli, “ refuse us a shelter amidst your groves and waterfalls ere the vintage be gathered. Methinks Rome, united with sweet Tivoli, grows reconciled to the Muses. Your suit is carried, Master Venoni : the council recognises its justice ; but I reserved the news for this holiday—you do not blame me, I trust.” This was whispered, with a half affectionate frankness, to a worthy citizen, who, finding himself amidst so many of the great, would have shrunk from the notice of the Tribune ; but it was the policy of Rienzi to pay an especial and marked attention to those engaged in commercial pursuits. As, after tarrying a moment or two with the merchant, he passed on, the tall person of the old Colonna caught his eye—

“ Signor,” said he, with a profound inclination of his head, but with a slight emphasis of tone, “ you will not fail us this evening.”

“ Tribune——” began the Colonna.

“ We receive no excuse,” interrupted the Tribune, hastily, and passed on.

He halted for a few moments before a small group of men plainly attired, who were watching him with intense interest ; for they, too, were scholars, and in Rienzi's rise they saw another evidence of that wonderful and sudden power which intellect had begun to assume over brute force. With these, as if abruptly mingled with congenial spirits, the Tribune relaxed all the gravity of his brow. Happier, perhaps, his living career—more unequivocal his posthumous renown—had his objects as his tastes been theirs !

“ Ah, *carissime !*” said he to one, whose arm he drew within his own—“ and how proceeds thy interpretation of the old marbles ?—half unravelled ? I rejoice to hear it ! Confer with me as of old, I pray thee. To-morrow—no, nor the day after, but next week—we will have a tranquil evening. Dear poet, your ode transported me to the days of Horace ; yet, methinks, we do wrong to reject the vernacular for the Latin. You shake your head ? Well, Petrarch thinks with you : his great epic moves with the stride of a giant—so I hear from his friend and envoy,—and here he is. My Lælius, is that not your name with Petrarch ? How shall I express my delight at his comforting, his inspiring letter ? Alas ! he overrates not my intentions, but my power. Of this hereafter.”

A slight shade darkened the Tribune's brow at these words ; but moving on, a long line of nobles and princes on either side, he regained his self-possession, and the dignity he had dropped with his former equals. Thus he passed through the crowd, and gradually disappeared.

“He bears him bravely,” said one, as the revellers reseated themselves. “Noticed you the *we*—the style royal?”

“But it must be owned that he lords it well,” said the ambassador of the Visconti: “less pride would be cringing to his haughty court.”

“Why,” said a professor of Bologna, “why is the Tribune called proud? I see no pride in him.”

“Nor I,” said a wealthy jeweller.

While these, and yet more contradictory, comments followed the exit of the Tribune, he passed into the saloon, where Nina presided; and here his fair person and silver tongue (“*Suavis coloratæque sententiæ*,” according to the description of Petrarch) won him a more general favour with the matrons than he experienced with their lords, and not a little contrasted the formal and nervous compliments of the good bishop, who served him on such occasions with an excellent foil.

But as soon as these ceremonies were done, and Rienzi mounted his horse, his manner changed at once into a stern and ominous severity.

“Vicar,” said he, abruptly, to the bishop, “we might well need your presence. Learn that at the Capitol now sits the Council in judgment upon an assassin. Last night, but for Heaven’s mercy, I should have fallen a victim to a hireling’s dagger. Knew you aught of this?”

And he turned so sharply on the bishop, that the poor canonist nearly dropped from his horse in surprise and terror.

“ I !——” said he.

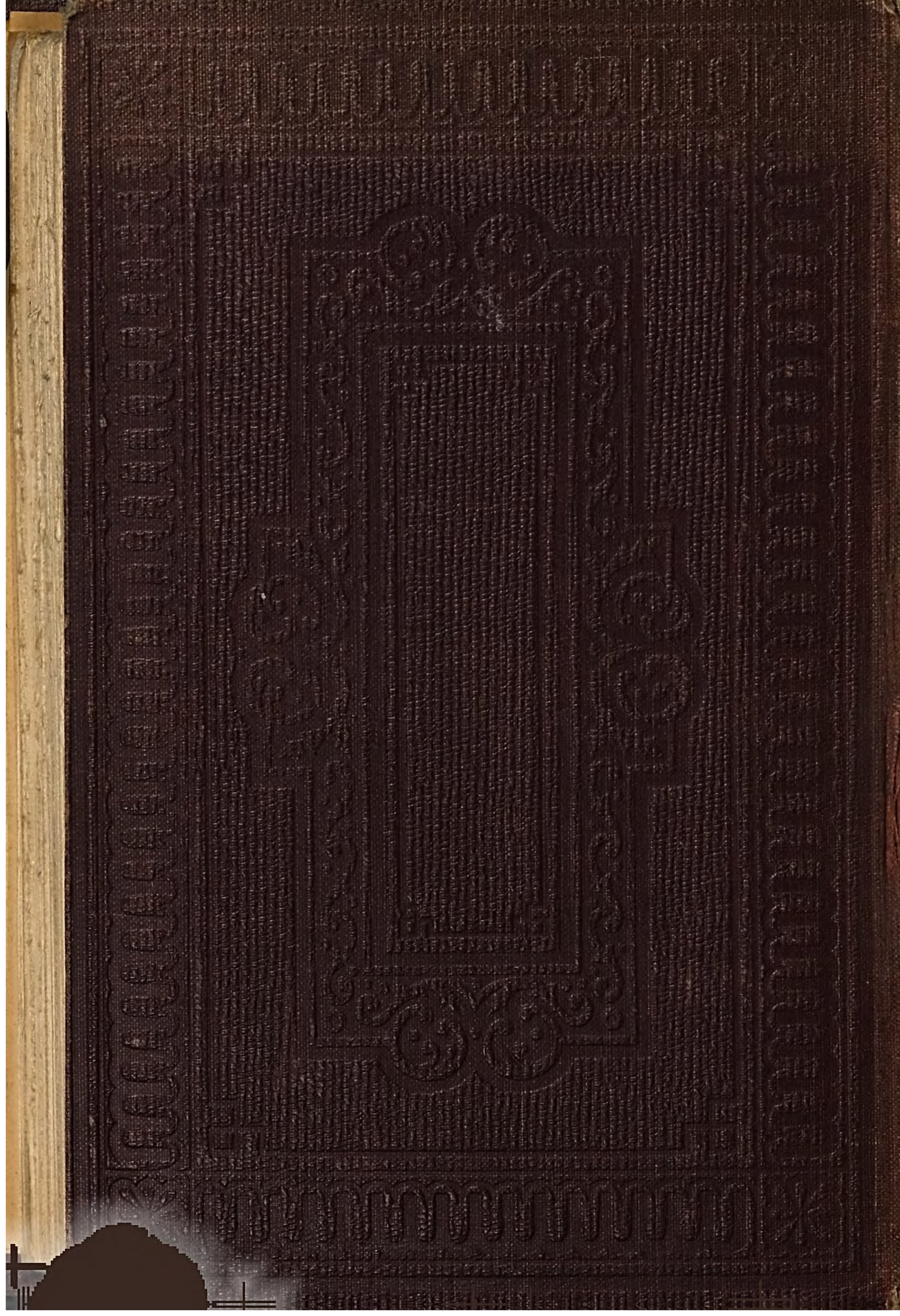
Rienzi smiled—“ No, good my lord bishop ! I see you are of no murderer’s mould. But to continue :—that I might not appear to act in mine own cause, I ordered the prisoner to be tried in my absence. In his trial (you marked the letter brought me at our banquet ?)——”

“ Ay, and you changed colour.”

“ Well I might : in his trial, I say, he has confessed that nine of the loftiest lords of Rome were his instigators. *They sup with me to-night !*—Vicar, forwards !”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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Lytton, Edward Bulwer Lytton,

Rienzi the last of the Roman tribunes ; in two volumes

Bd.: 1

Edinburgh [u.a.] 1861

Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek -- L.angl.o.16-b(1
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11714840-4